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ARLESTON • BARBUCCI

Enkhö



EKHO
The Preshauns' Secret

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Colors
Nolwenn LEBRETON

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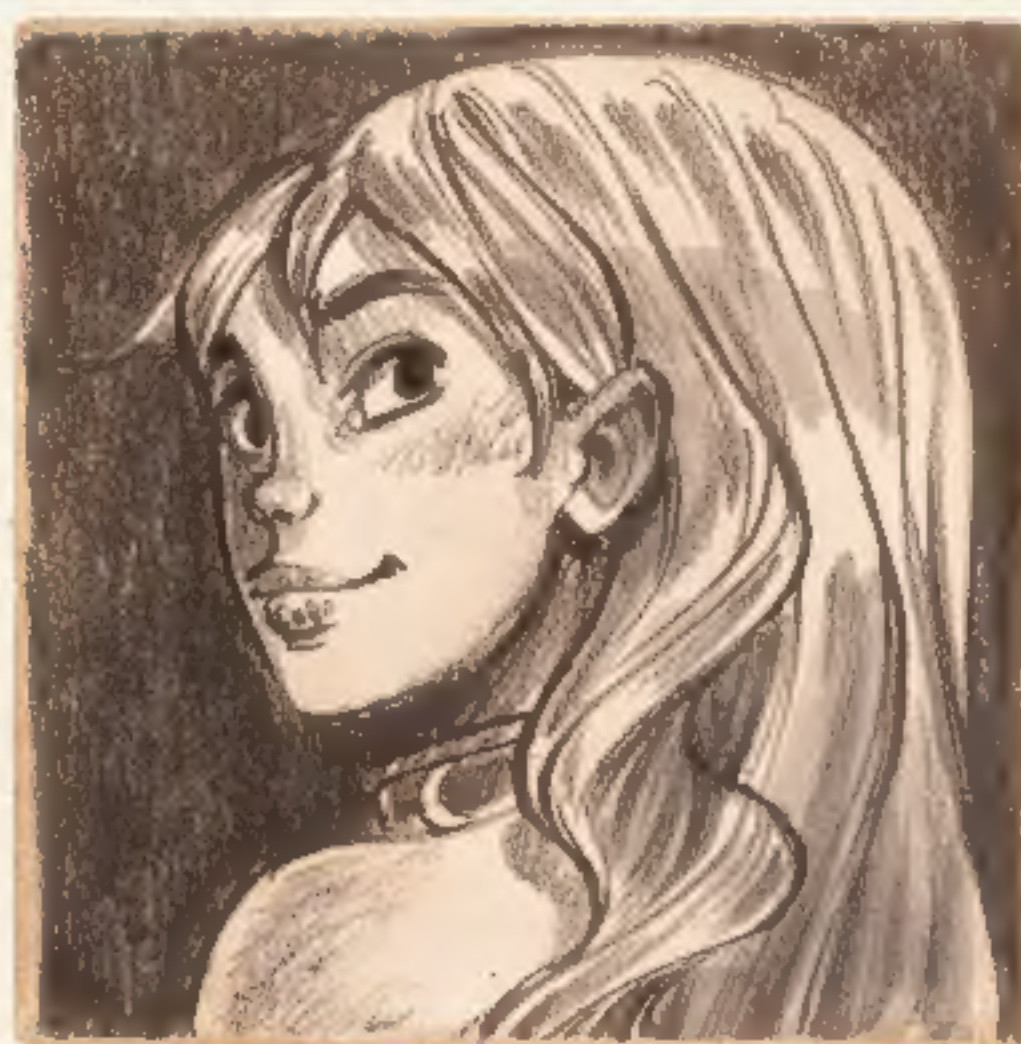
EKHO IS THE EARTH, EXCEPT IT'S NOT.



Here we find the same cities, the same countries, but everything's different - it's a world without electricity. One may be born here, or brought in from Earth by some funny little creatures, the Preshauns. Nobody knows exactly what the Preshauns want...



But Fourmille and Youri's arrival is going to upset the balance kept by the Preshauns. Possessed by ghosts, Fourmille must solve their problems in order to go back to being herself again... For when she changes hairstyle, it's a sign she is inhabited by another personality...



FOURMILLE GRATULE

was flying to New York when she tumbled on Ekho. An inheritance was waiting for her and she's now the head of a talent agency.



YURI PODROV

a computer guy, was Fourmille's seat-mate on the plane. He's been accidentally dragged to Ekho with her. Usually their personalities are hardly compatible.



GRACE LUMUMBA

she is a native to Ekho. Loyal secretary of the Gratule Agency. In her spare time she's Yumma the stripper.



SIGISBERT DE MOTAFIUME

this Preshaun is a young clerk. His mission is to make sure that the presence of Fourmille and Youri doesn't affect the delicate balance of the mirror world too much!



THE PRESHAUNS

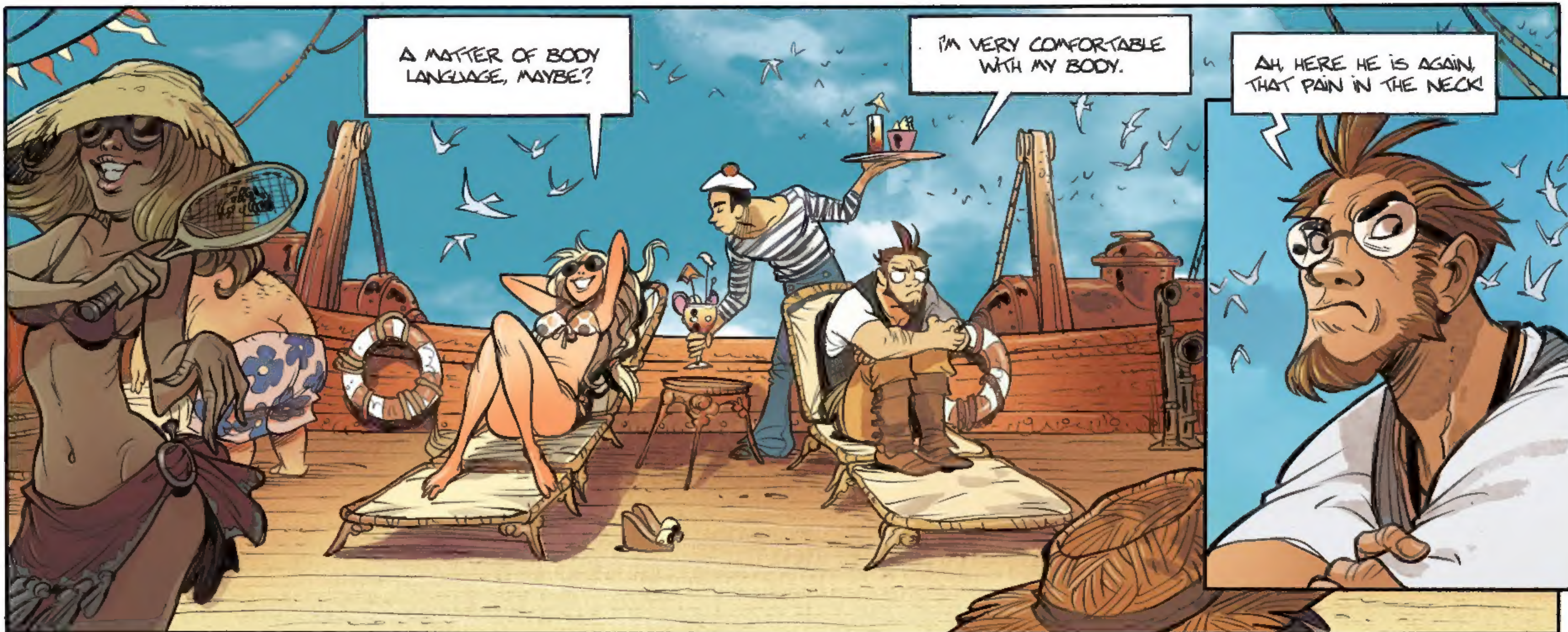
are strange and well mannered little creatures who ensure the proper functioning of Ekho; by using strange machines, they keep what they call the Thaumic equilibrium. They have to drink tea at specific times of the day, otherwise they might turn into dreadful, out of control, monsters!

THE SQUEAKY MARY II, A SEAN-SUBMERSIBLE CRUISE SHIP SET UPON A GIANT SQUID, HAD SET OFF FROM BARCELONA TWO DAYS BEFORE, HEADED TO ROME. YURI, SIGSBERT AND I EMBARKED AT THE LAST MINUTE.

IN ROME, MAYBE I'D FIND THE ANSWERS I SOUGHT, SO I COULDN'T WAIT TO GET THERE, BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP ME FROM ENJOYING THE JOURNEY.

DON'T BE MAD AT ME, YURI!

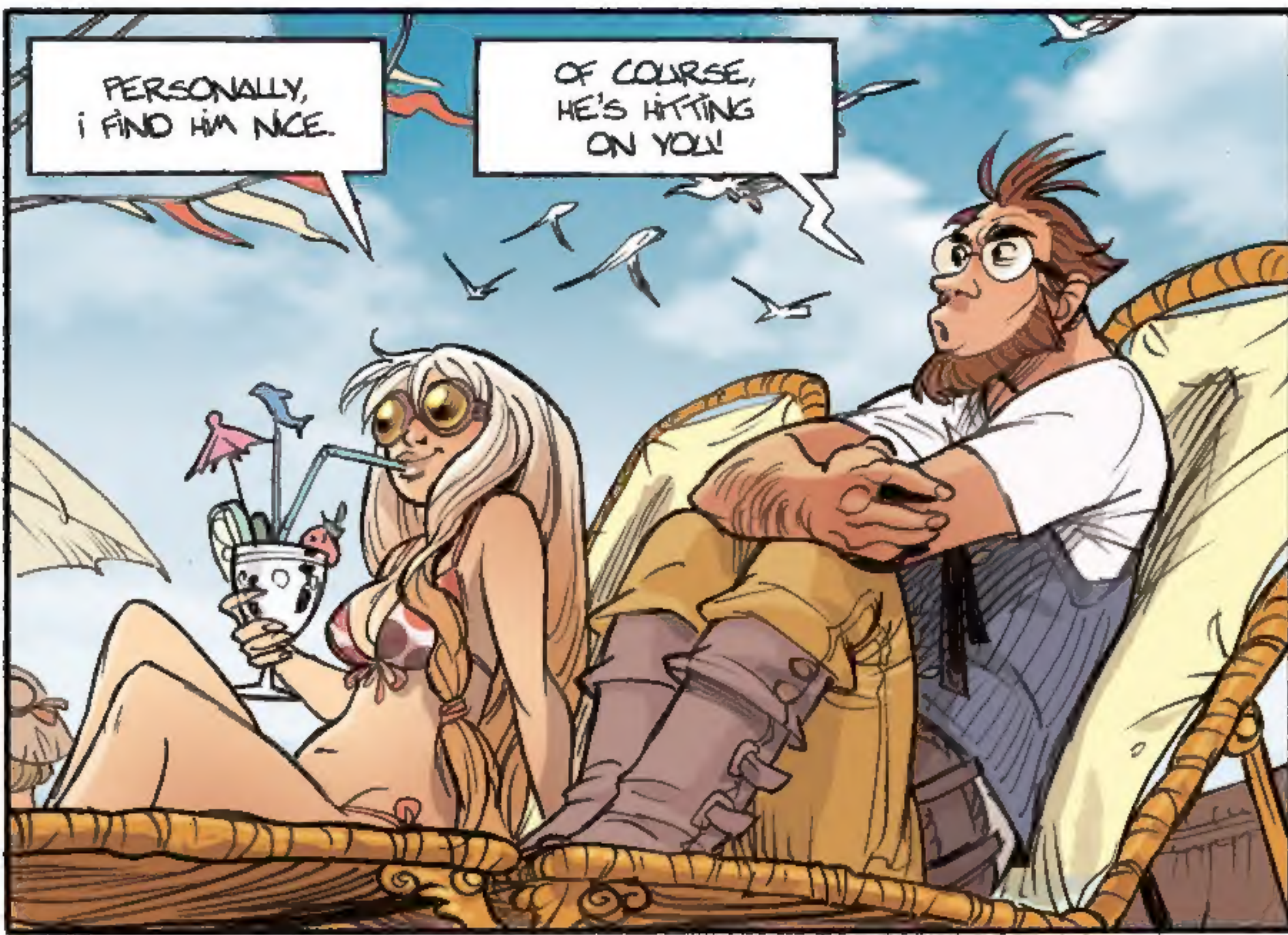
I'M NOT MAD AT YOU. ANYWAY, BEING MAD IS NOT MY THING. WHY DO YOU SAY I'M MAD?



A MATTER OF BODY LANGUAGE, MAYBE?

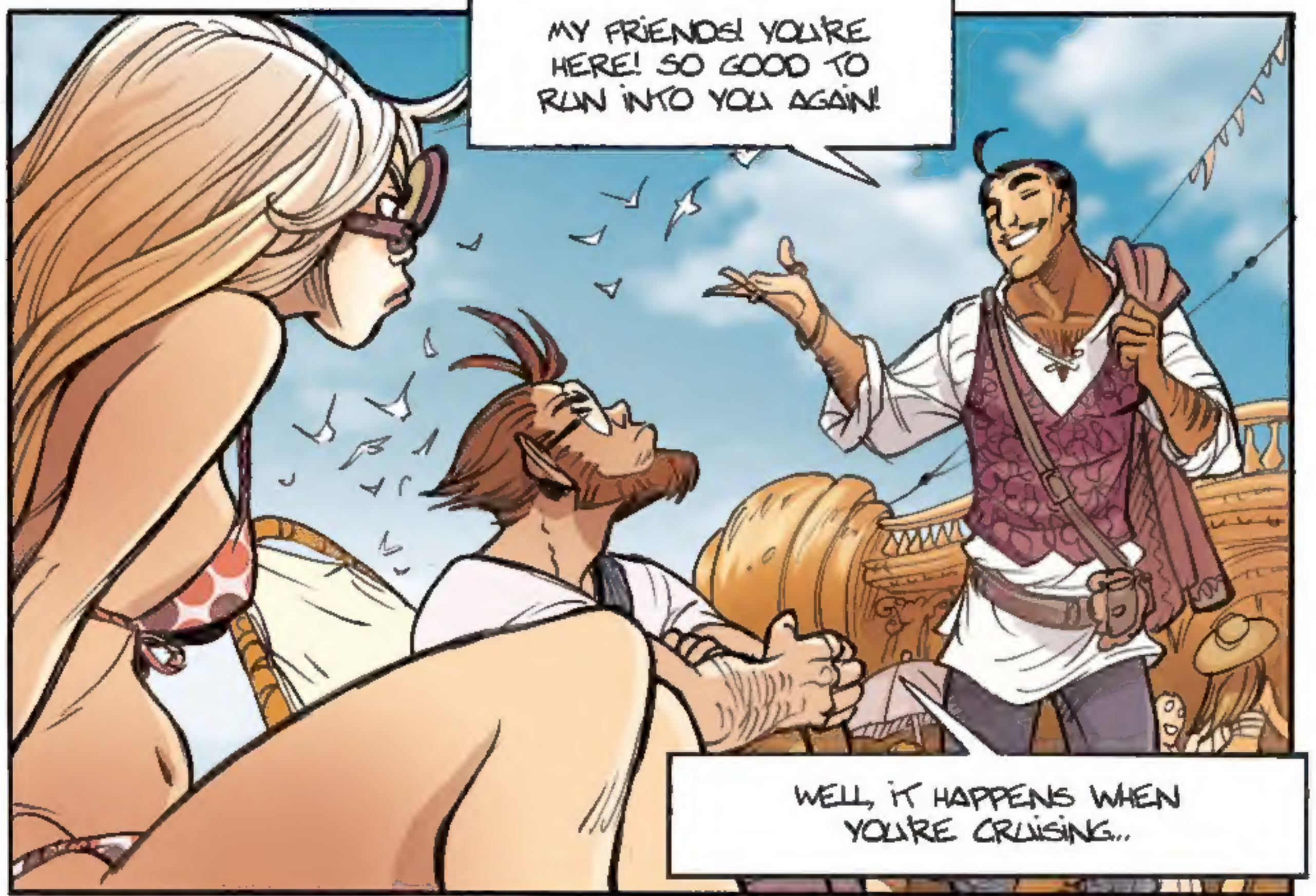
I'M VERY COMFORTABLE WITH MY BODY.

AH, HERE HE IS AGAIN. THAT PAIN IN THE NECK!



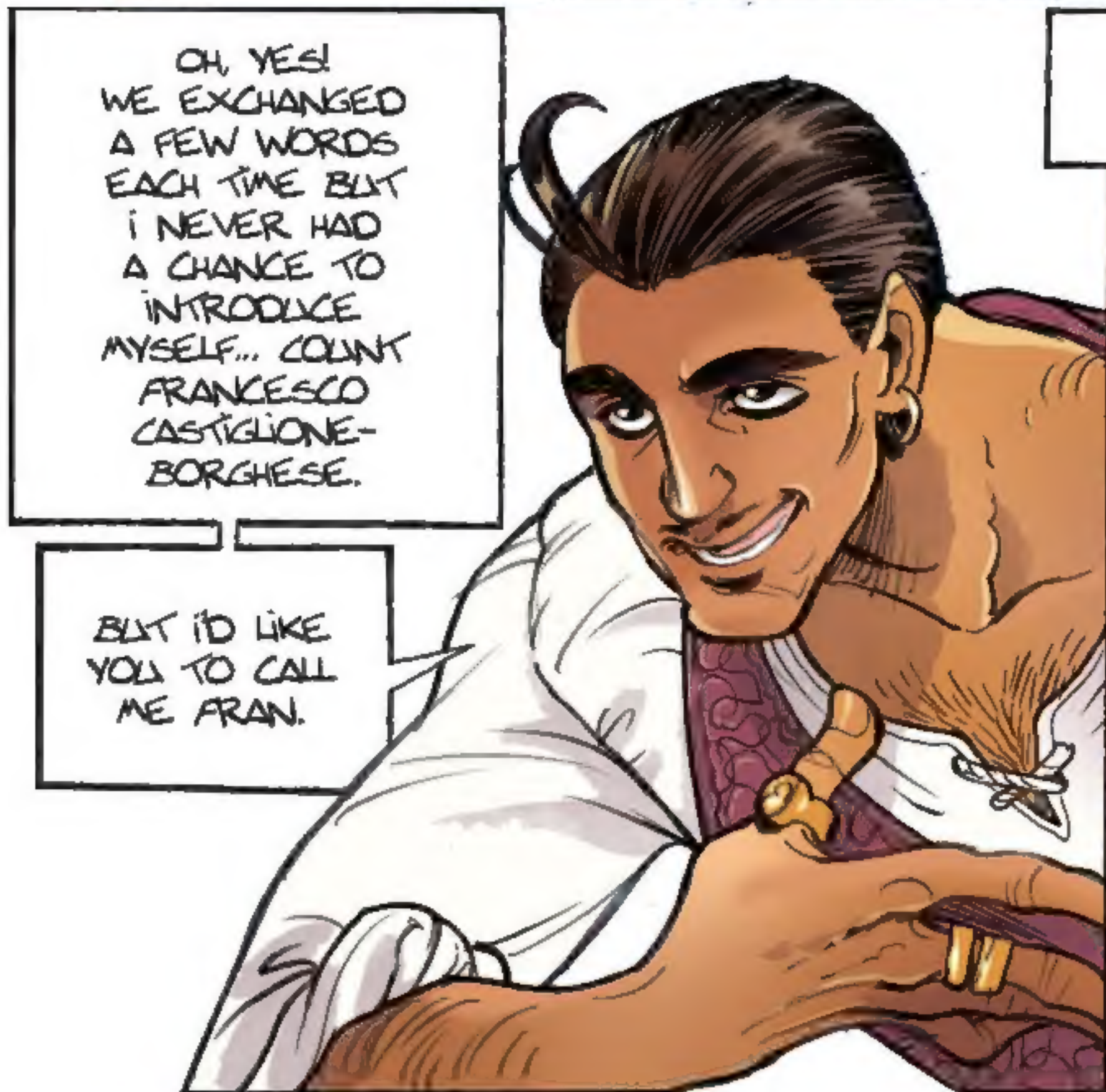
PERSONALLY, I FIND HIM NICE.

OF COURSE, HE'S HITTING ON YOU!



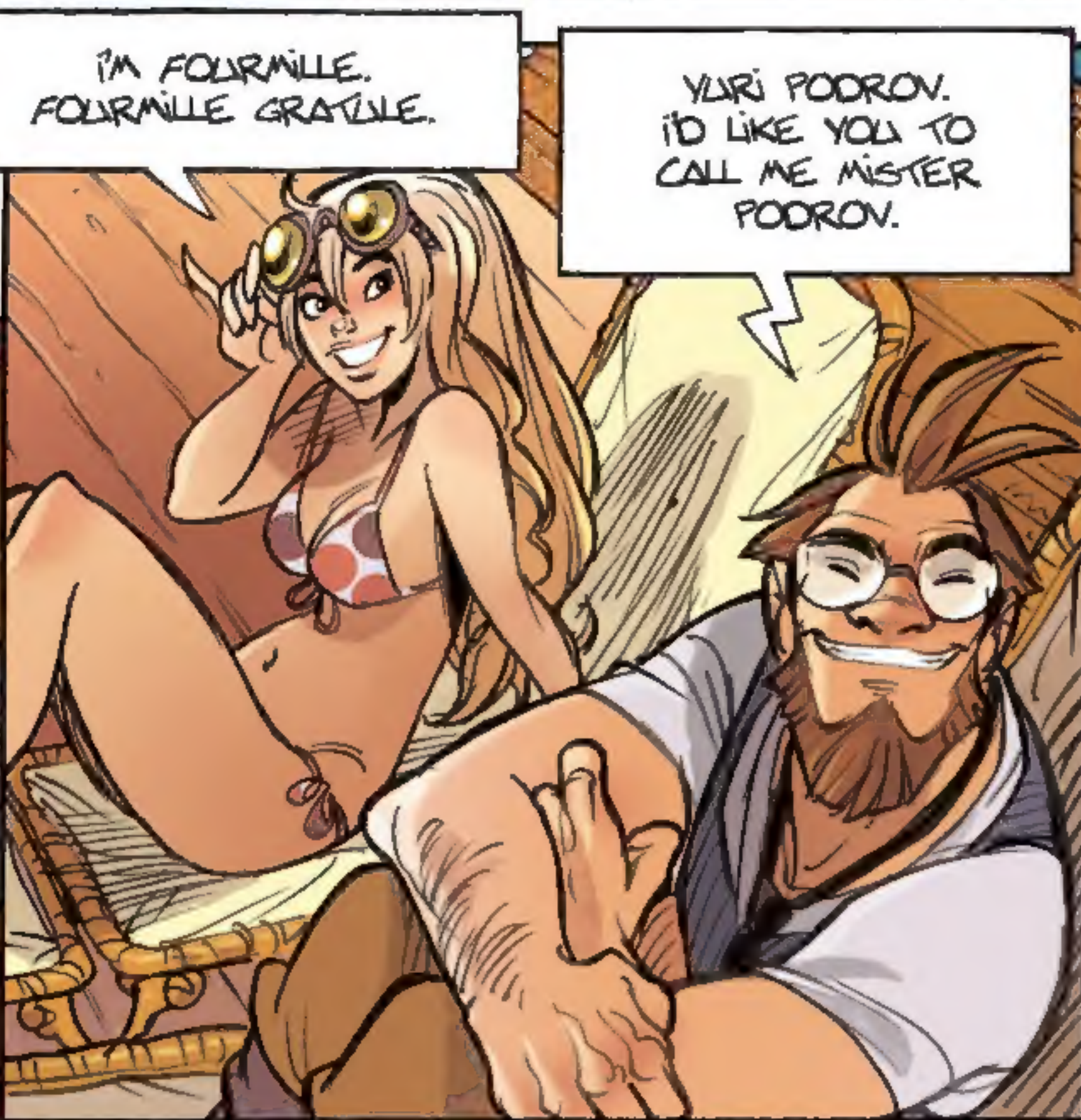
MY FRIENDS! YOU'RE HERE! SO GOOD TO RUN INTO YOU AGAIN!

WELL, IT HAPPENS WHEN YOU'RE CRUISING...



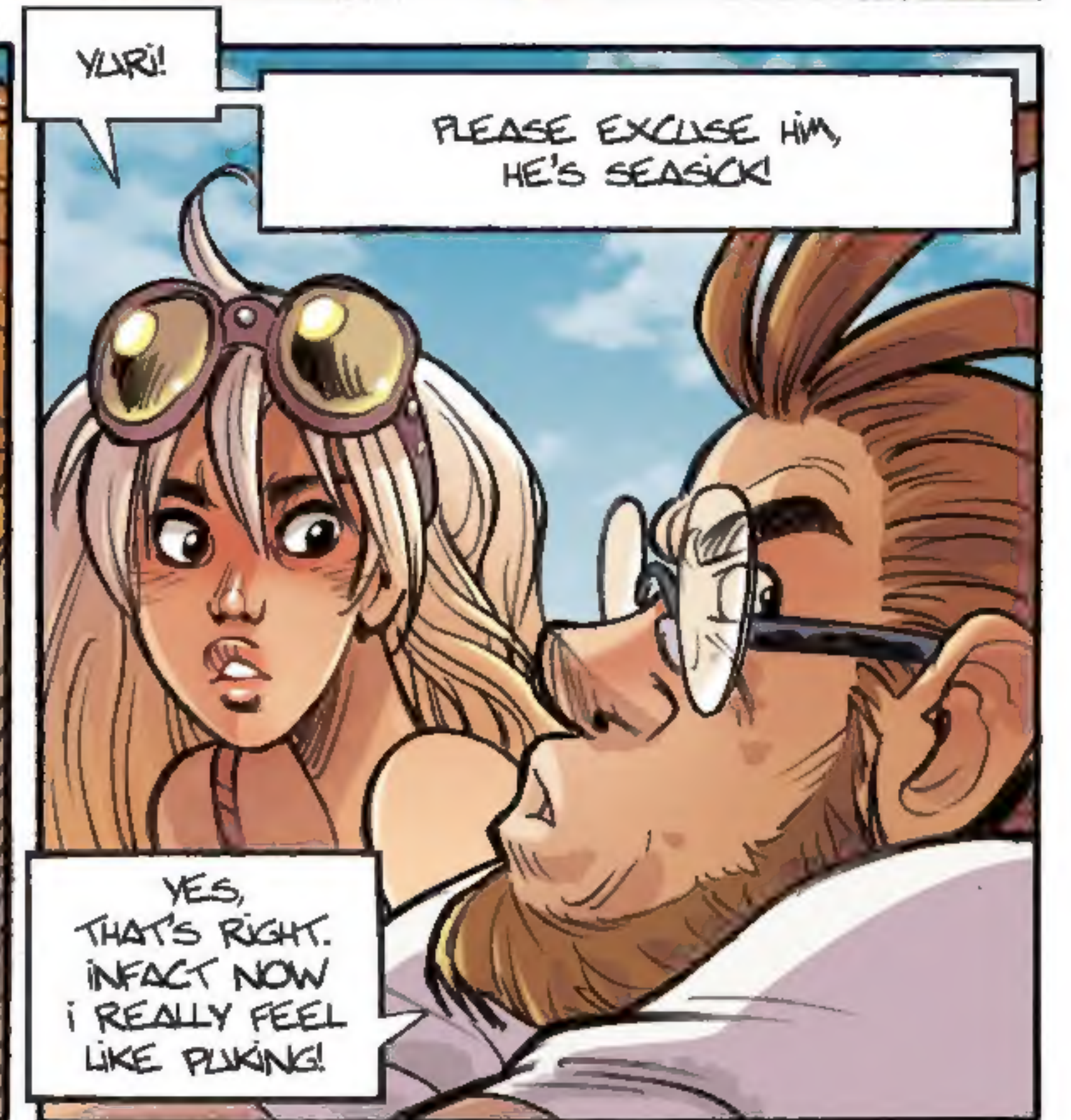
OH, YES! WE EXCHANGED A FEW WORDS EACH TIME BUT I NEVER HAD A CHANCE TO INTRODUCE MYSELF... COUNT FRANCESCO CASTIGLIONE-BORGHESE.

BUT I'D LIKE YOU TO CALL ME FRAN.



I'M FOURMILLE, FOURMILLE GRATULE.

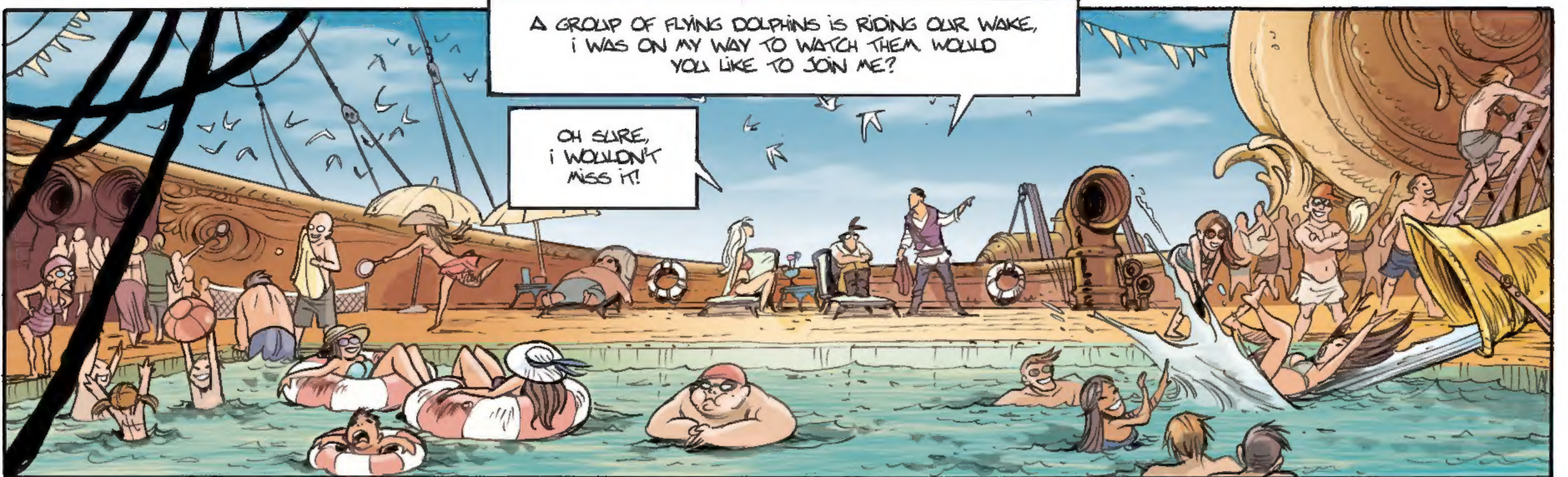
YURI PODROV, I'D LIKE YOU TO CALL ME MISTER PODROV.



YURI!

PLEASE EXCUSE HIM, HE'S SEASICK!

YES, THAT'S RIGHT. INFACIT NOW I REALLY FEEL LIKE PUKING!



A GROUP OF FLYING DOLPHINS IS RIDING OUR WAKE, I WAS ON MY WAY TO WATCH THEM. WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN ME?

OH SURE, I WOULDN'T MISS IT!



ARE YOU COMING, YURI?

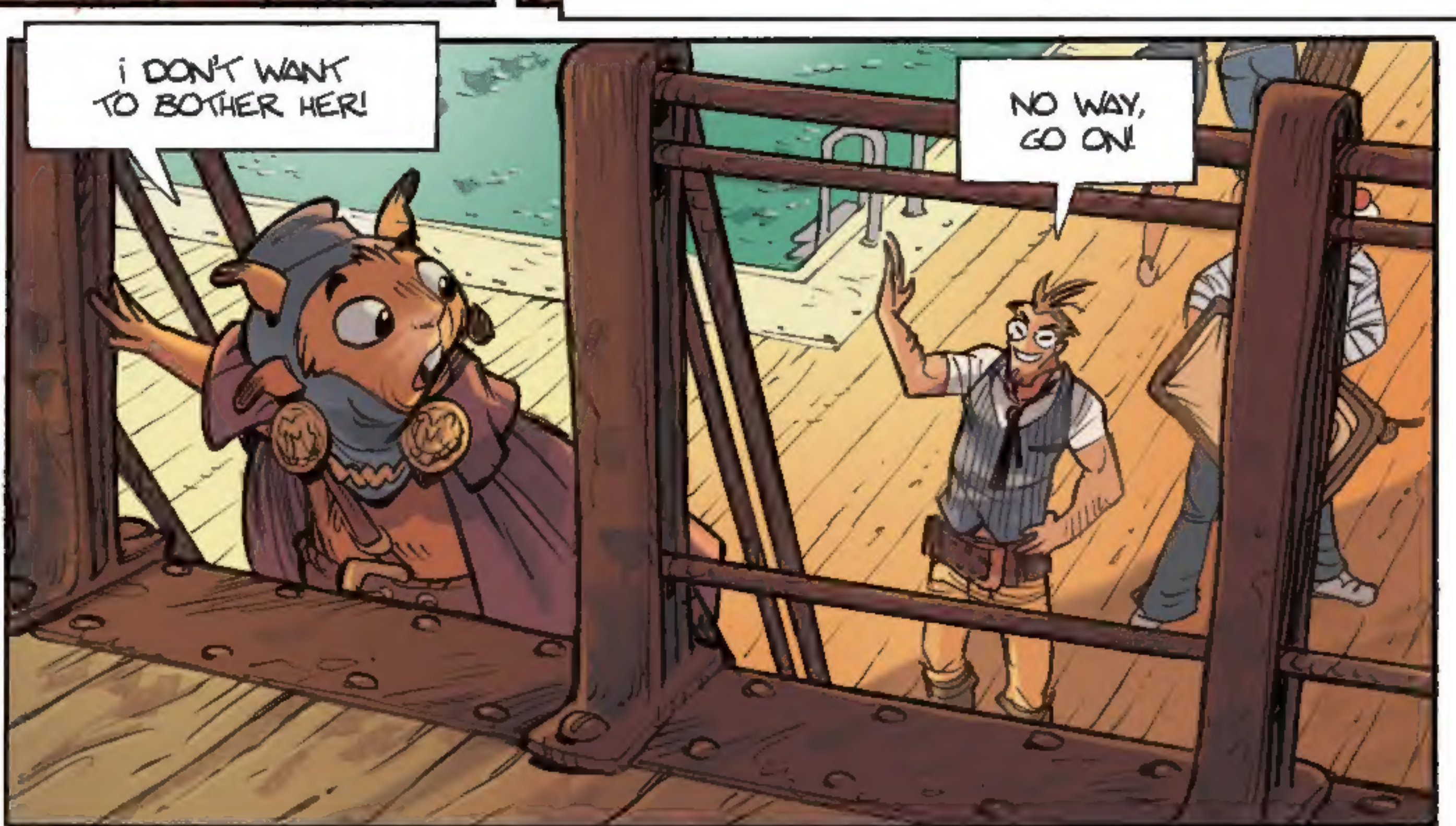
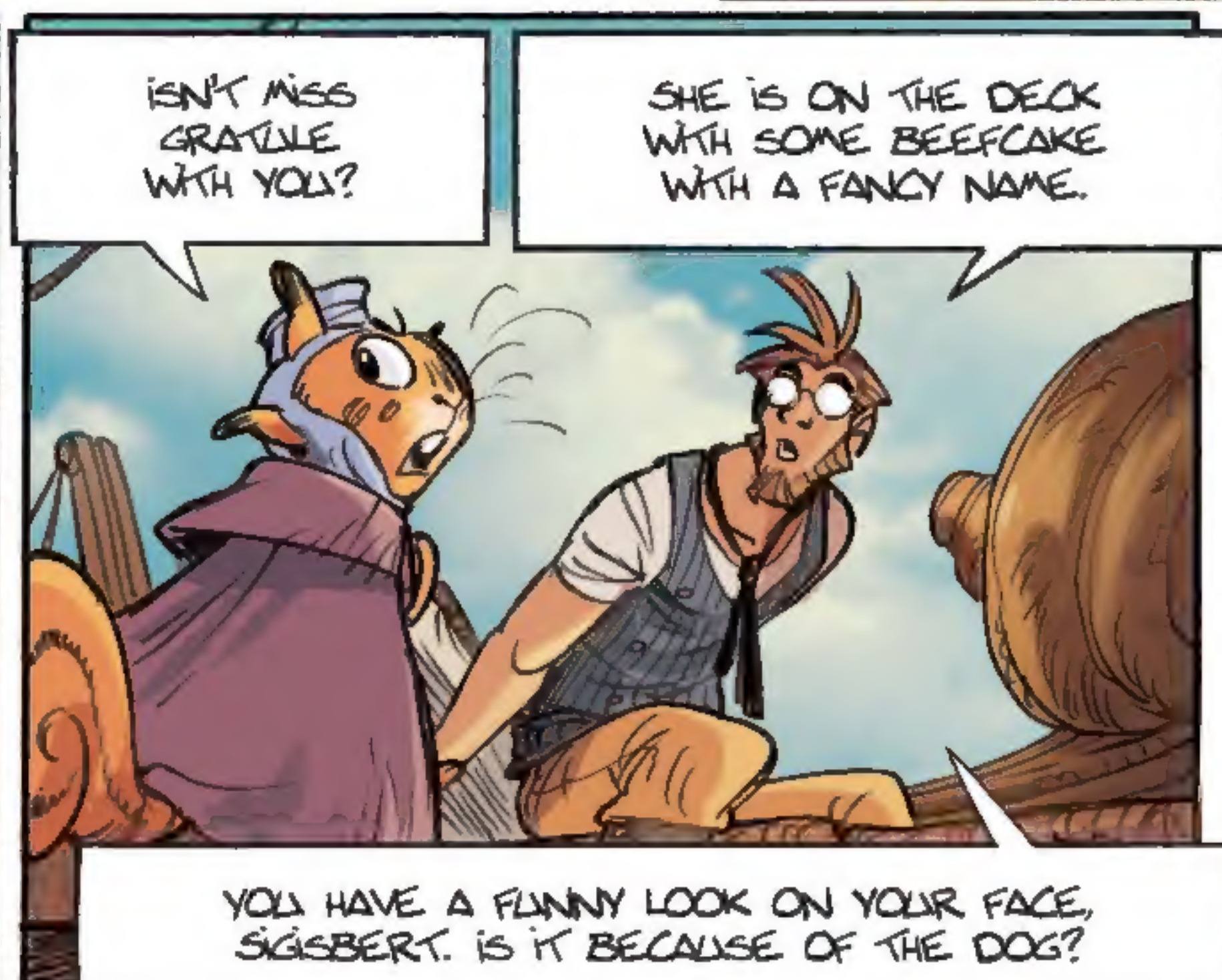
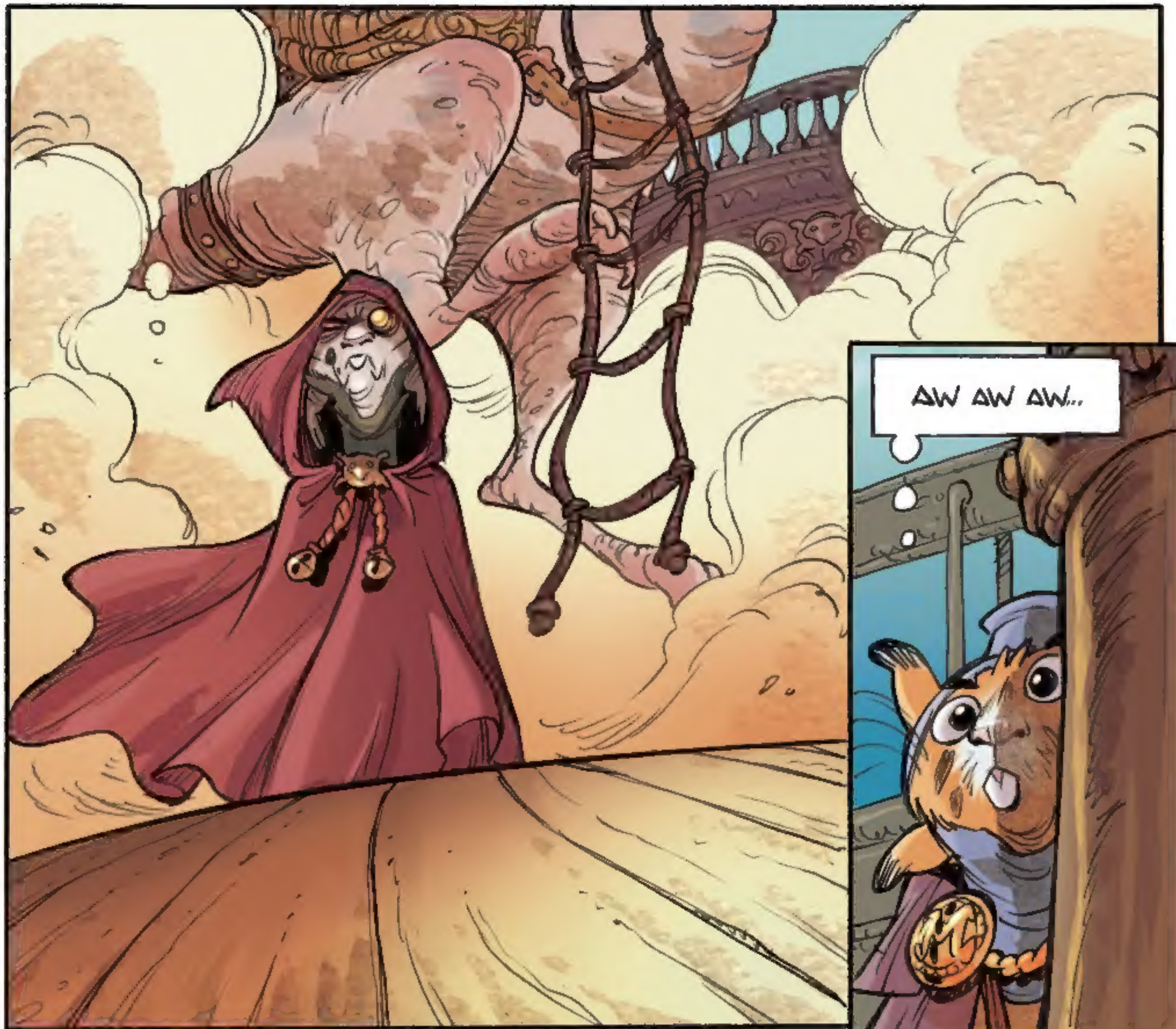
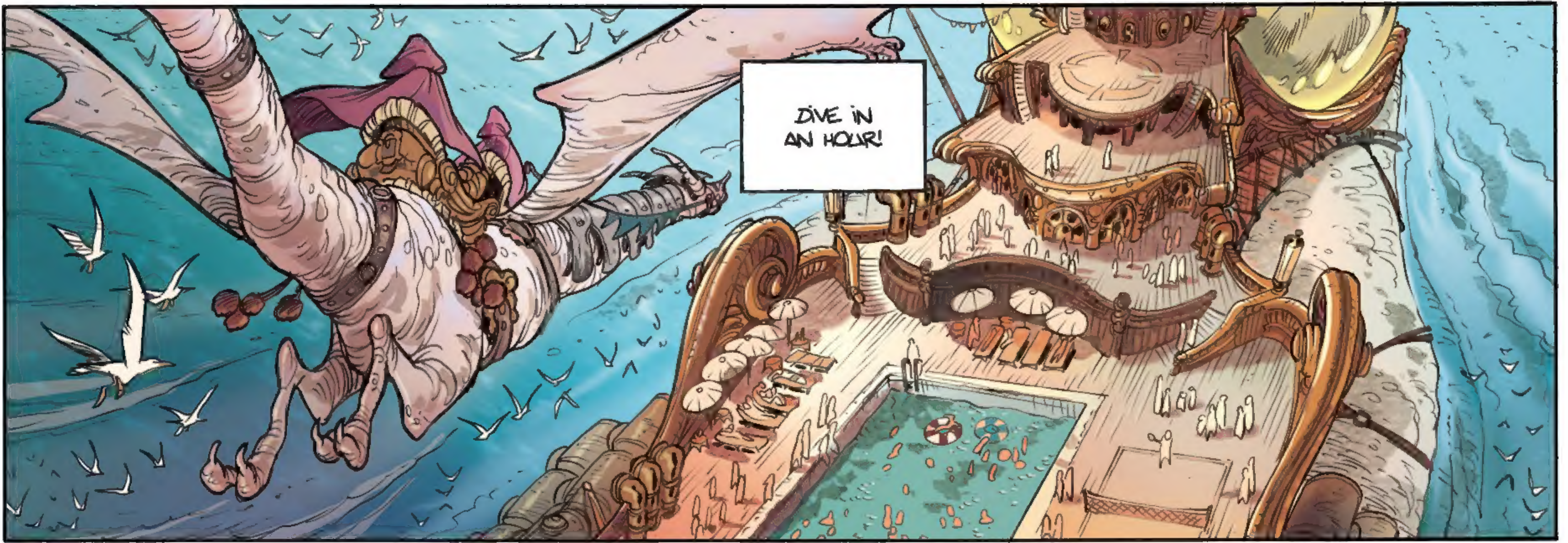
NO, I'M VERY FINE HERE. I'LL STAY HERE AND PUKE QUIETLY.

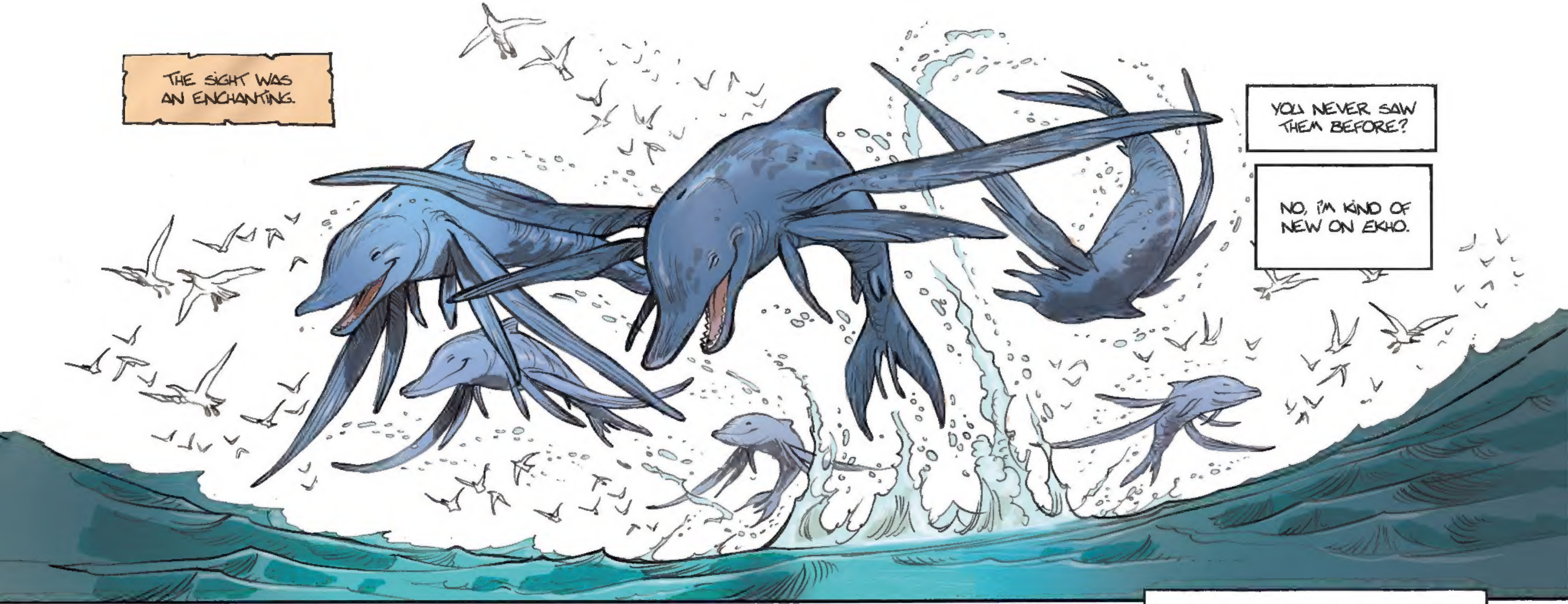


WHAT A SHOW OFF!



ATTENTION PLEASE! PASSENGERS ARE INFORMED THAT WE'LL SWITCH TO THE DIVING MODE WITHIN AN HOUR!





THE SIGHT WAS AN ENCHANTING.

YOU NEVER SAW THEM BEFORE?

NO, I'M KIND OF NEW ON EKH0.

I KNEW IT! SUCH A DIVINE CREATURE AS YOU COULDN'T LIVE IN THIS WORLD WITHOUT MY KNOWLEDGE!

AHEM, MISS GRATULE... MAY I HAVE A WORD?

OH?

I... MR PODROV SAID I WOULDN'T BE DISTURBING...

I'M LISTENING, SIGSBERT.

BUT IT'S A DELICATE MATTER... AND... ERA...

DING DING

LAST CALL BEFORE DIVE!

ALL PASSENGERS INSIDE!

I THINK YOUR FRIEND WOULD LIKE TO TALK TO YOU IN PRIVATE, FOURAILLE.

RIGHT!

I'LL MEET YOU LATER

WOULD YOU CONSIDER HAVING DINNER AT MY TABLE, TONIGHT?

ABSOLUTELY! WE WILL BE PLEASED TO JOIN YOU!

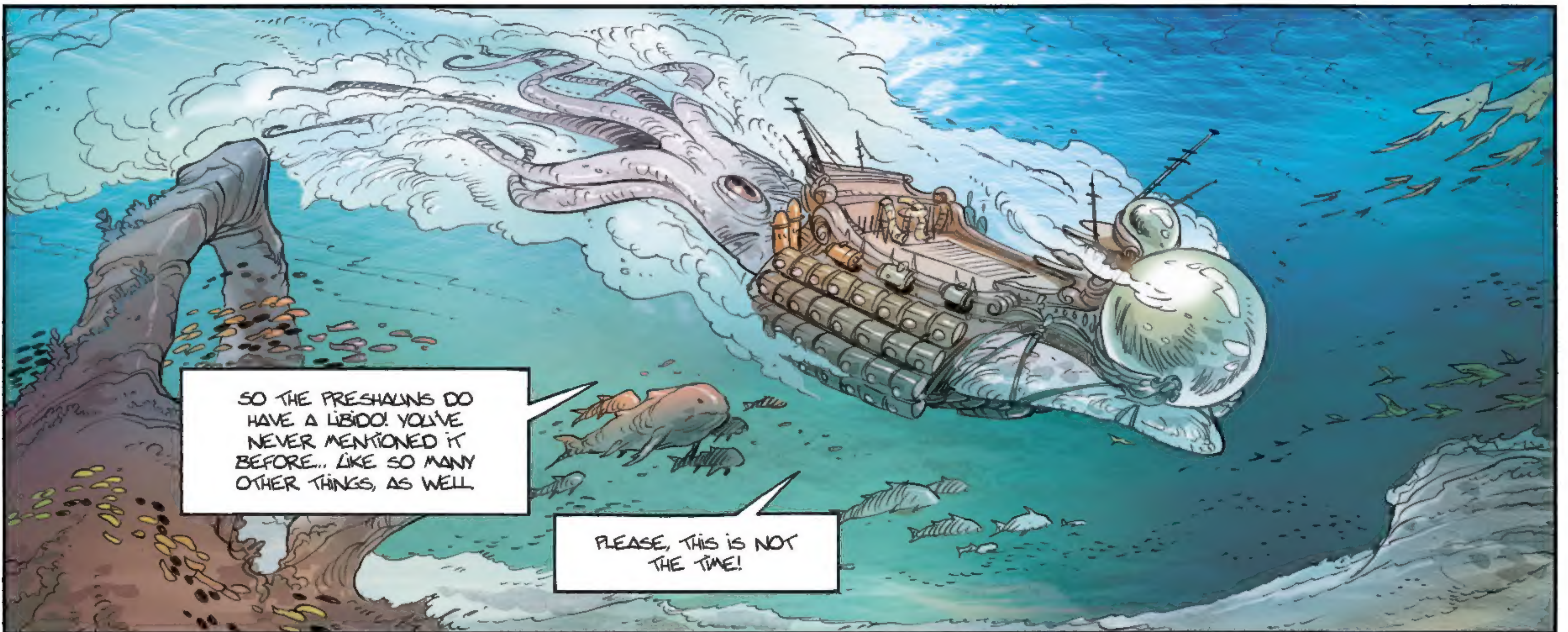
OH, YES, "WE".

YOUR FRIENDS ARE WELCOME, OF COURSE.

ISN'T HE CHARMING? HE'S CLASSY, HANDSOME...

Croui Croui Croui

I WOULDN'T KNOW. HUMANS ARE OUTSIDE THE RANGE OF MY LIBIDO. AND I'M VERY HAPPY ABOUT THAT.



SO THE PRESALINS DO HAVE A LIBIDO! YOU'VE NEVER MENTIONED IT BEFORE... LIKE SO MANY OTHER THINGS, AS WELL

PLEASE, THIS IS NOT THE TIME!



SO, WHY DID YOU WANT TO TALK TO ME?

i...

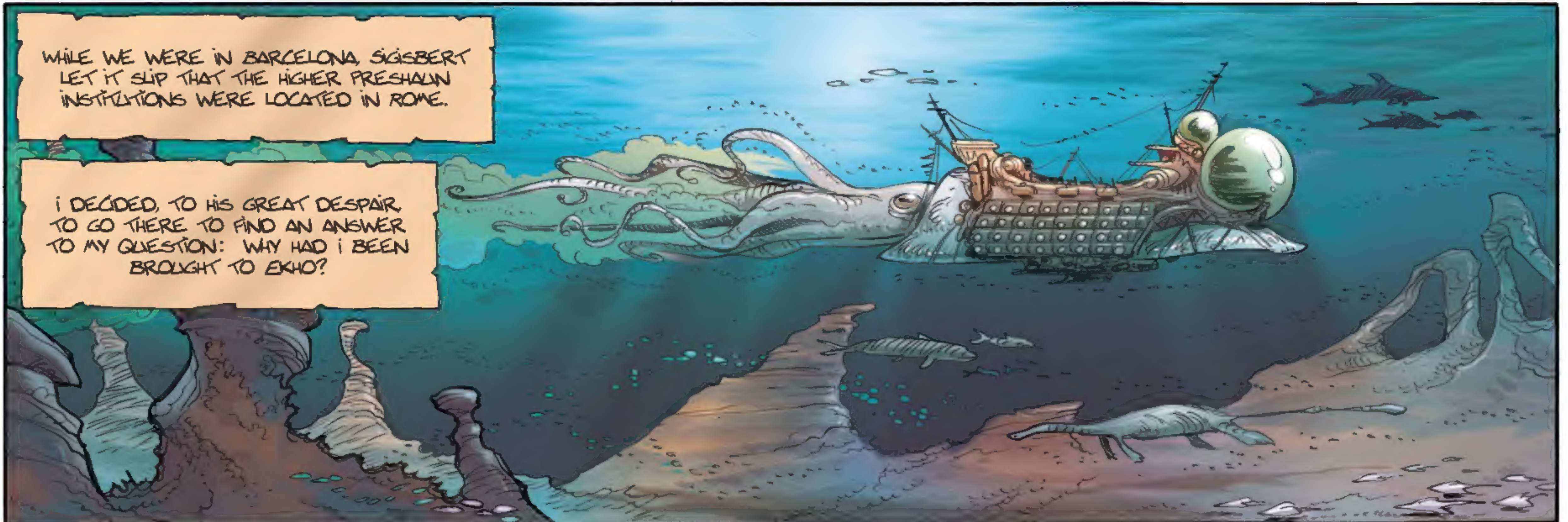


LET'S GO TO THE CABINS, MR PODROV MUST BE WAITING FOR US!



A CUP OF TEA WILL BE GOOD FOR US ALL

OH, YES!



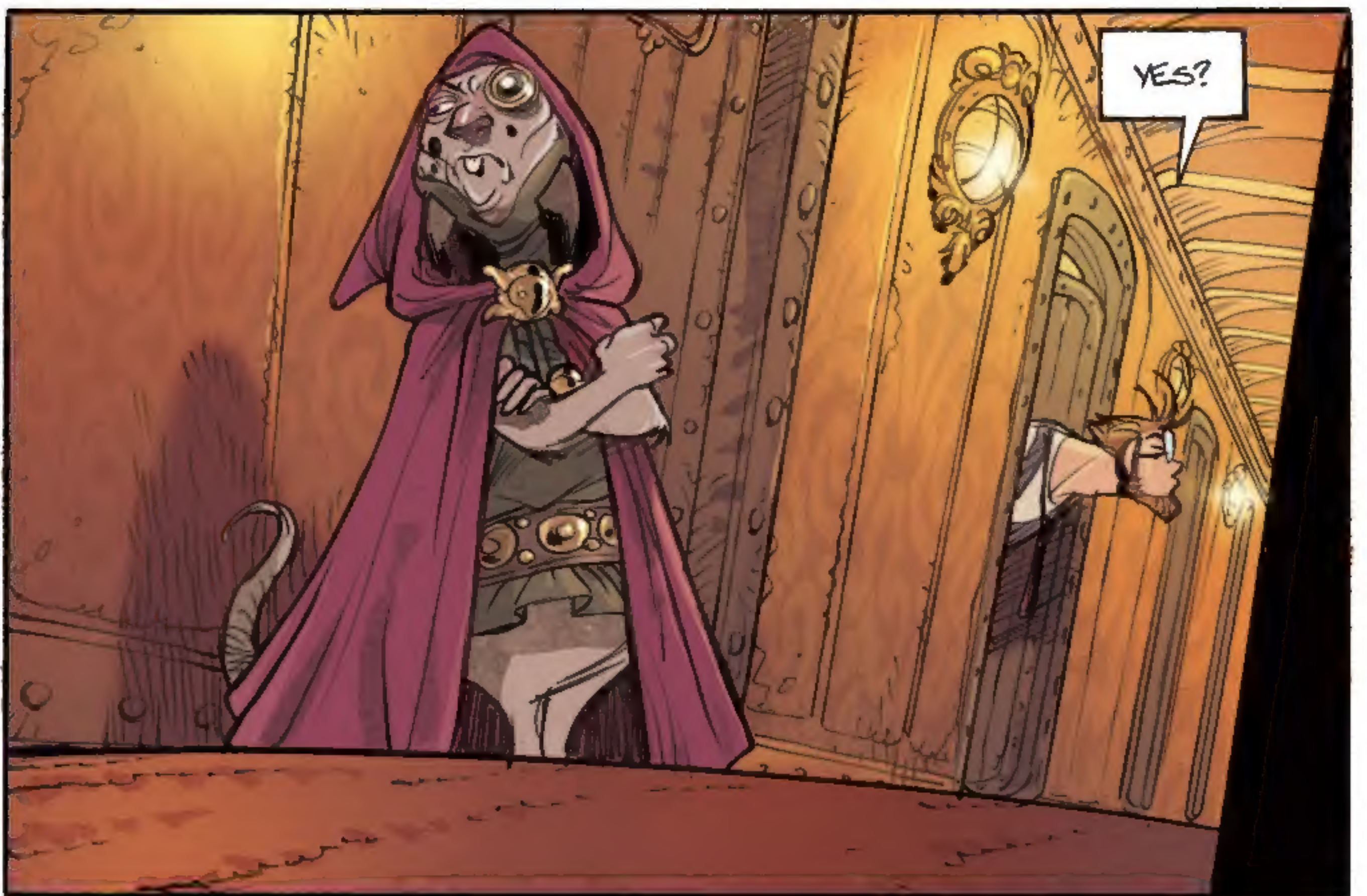
WHILE WE WERE IN BARCELONA, SIGSBERT LET IT SLIP THAT THE HIGHER PRESALIN INSTITUTIONS WERE LOCATED IN ROME.

I DECIDED, TO HIS GREAT DESPAIR, TO GO THERE TO FIND AN ANSWER TO MY QUESTION: WHY HAD I BEEN BROUGHT TO ECHO?

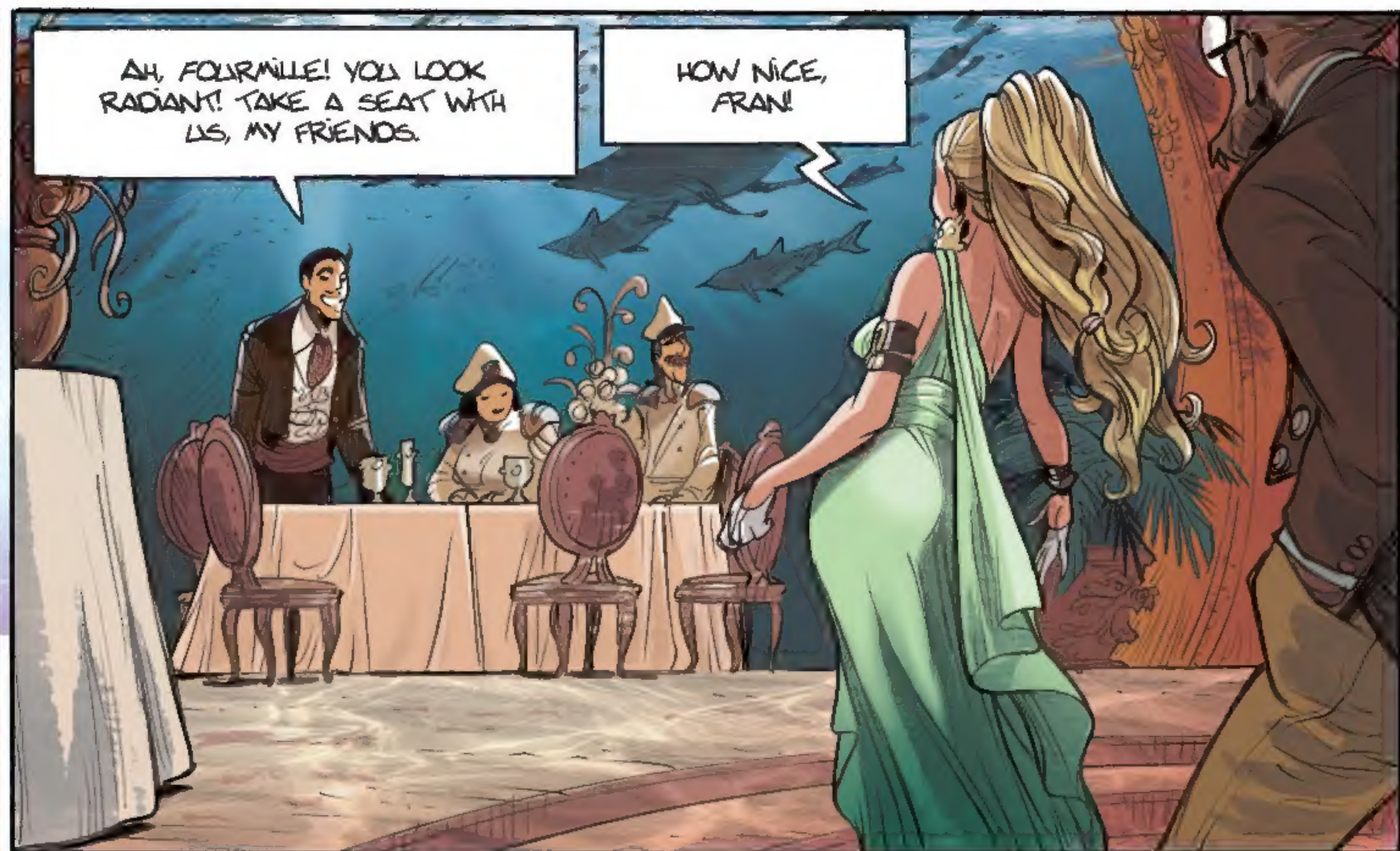
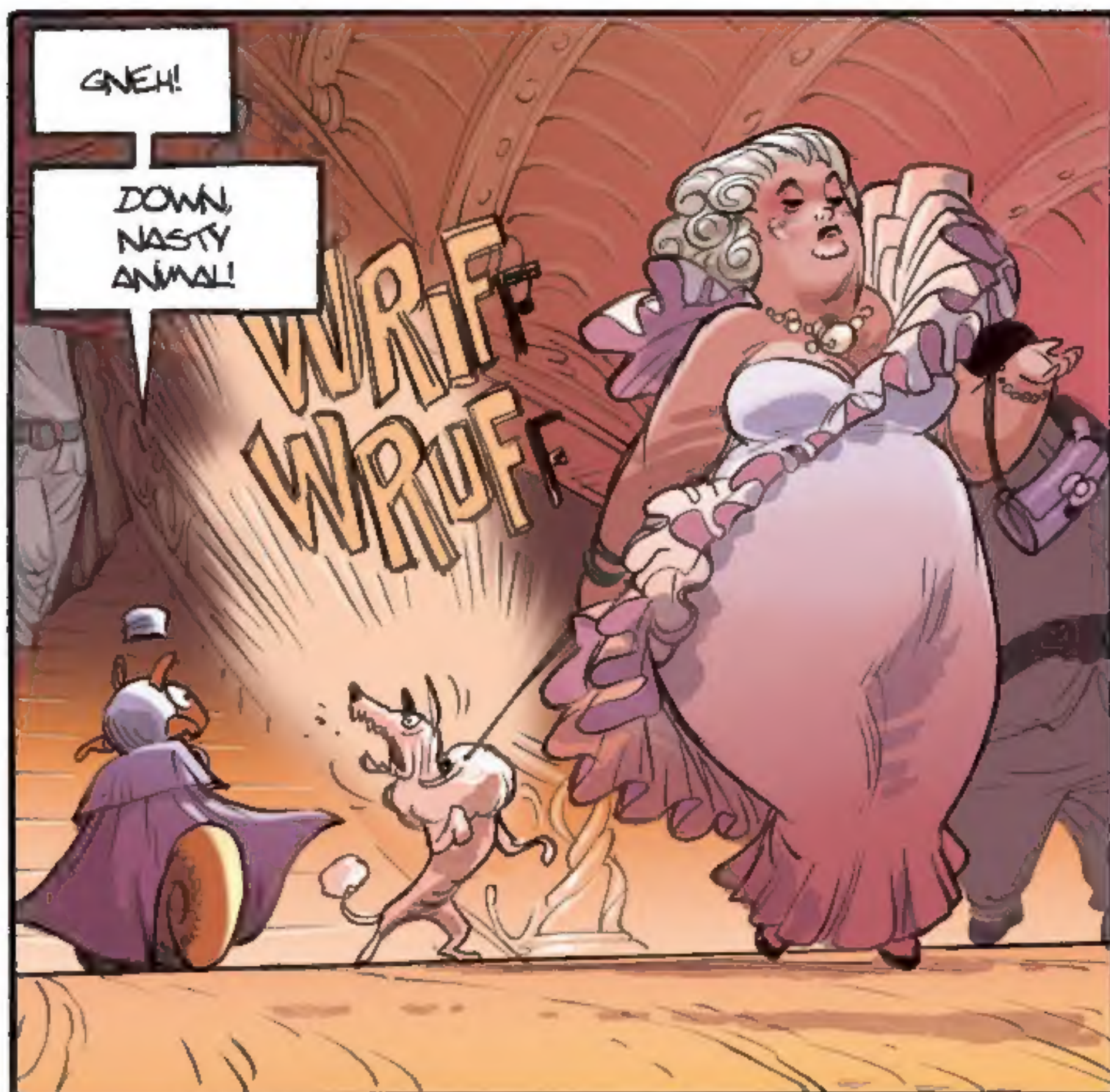
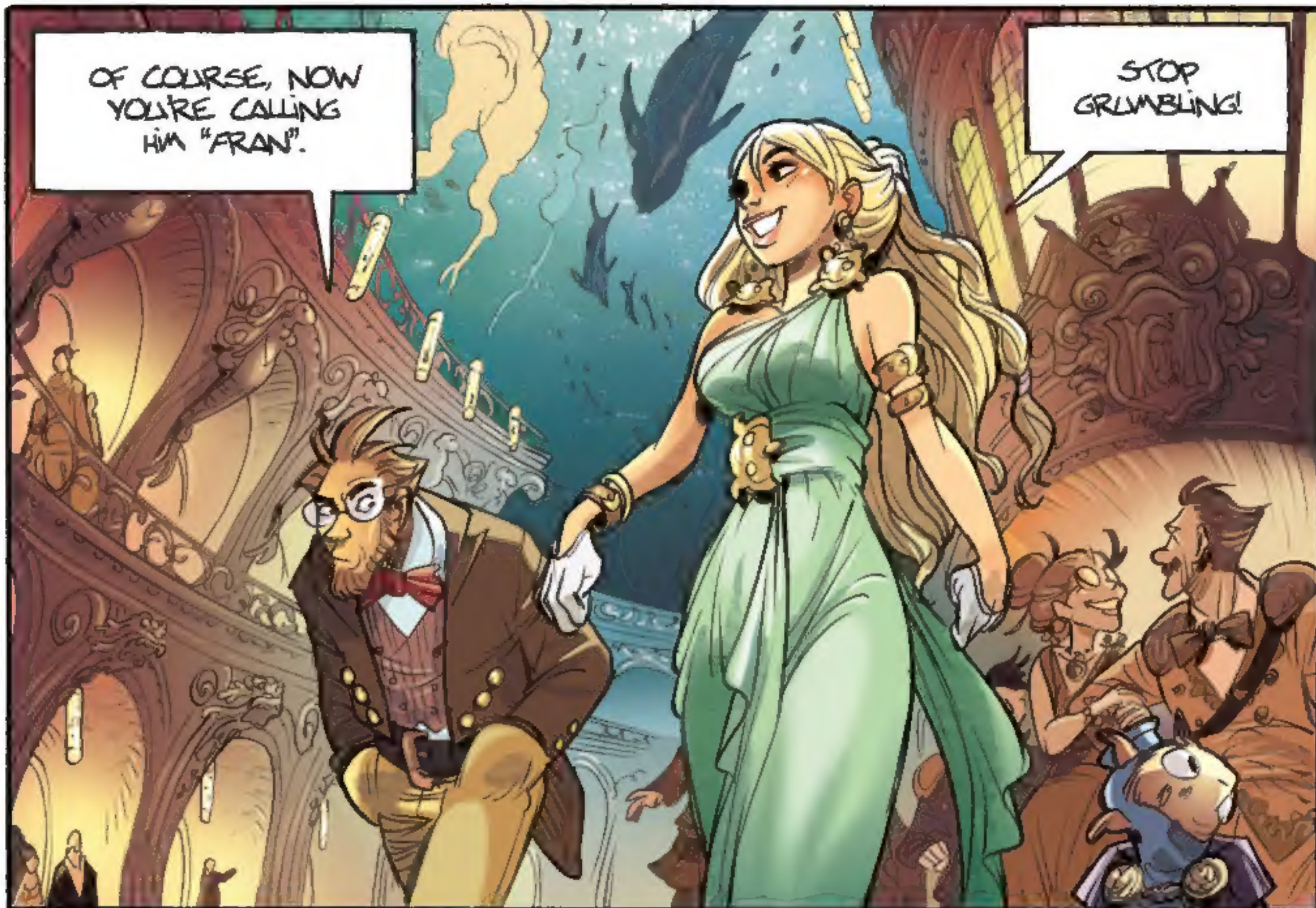


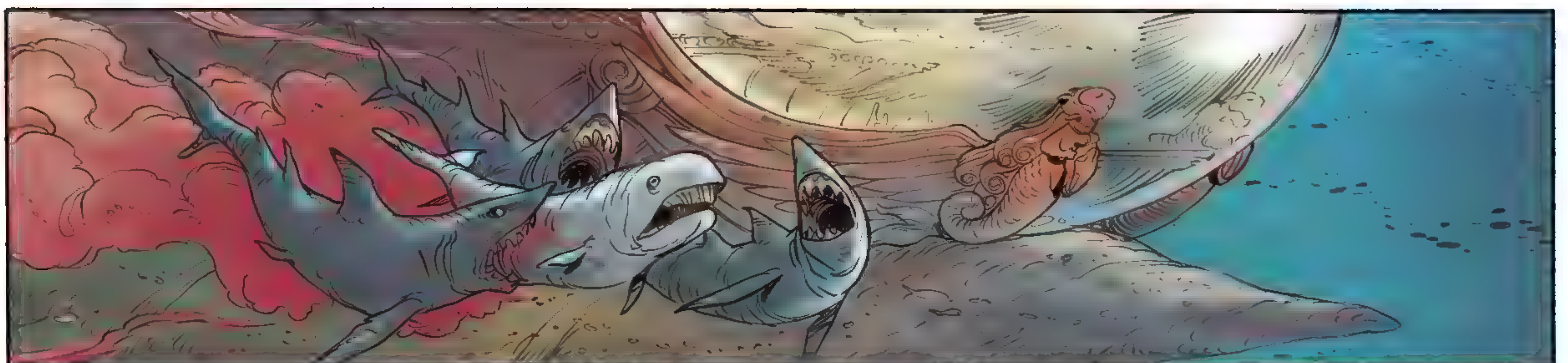
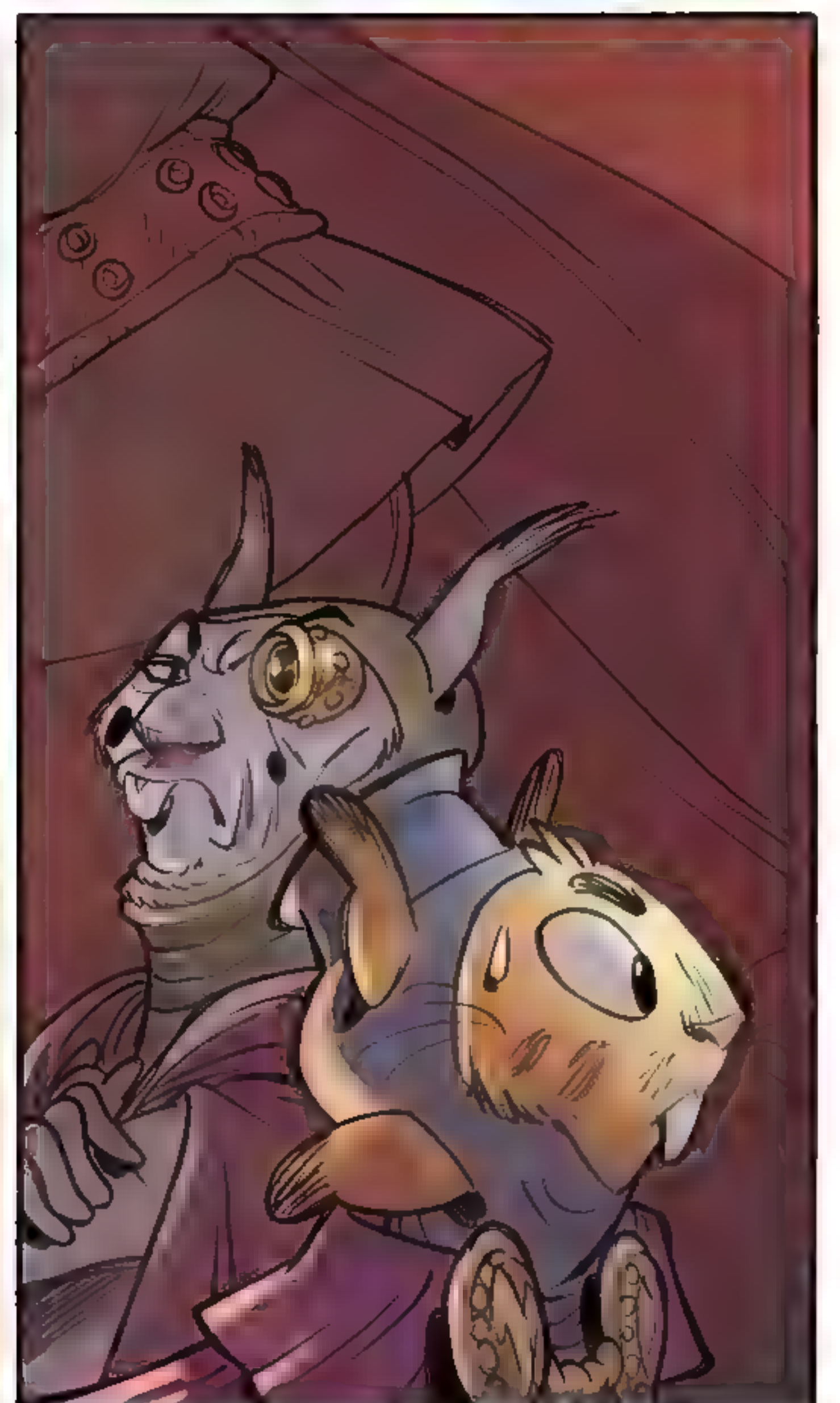
HE HAD NO CHOICE BUT FOLLOW YURI AND ME.

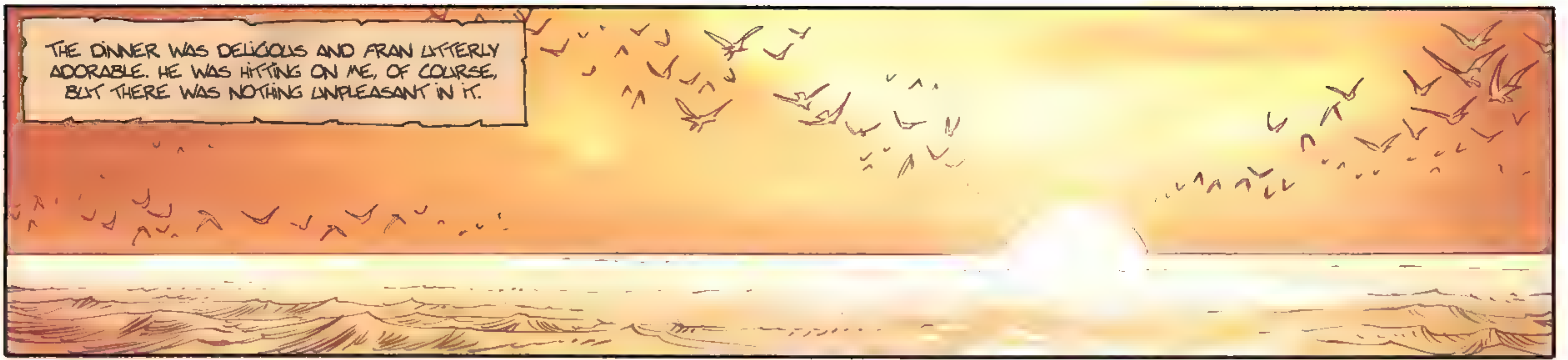
Toc Toc Toc



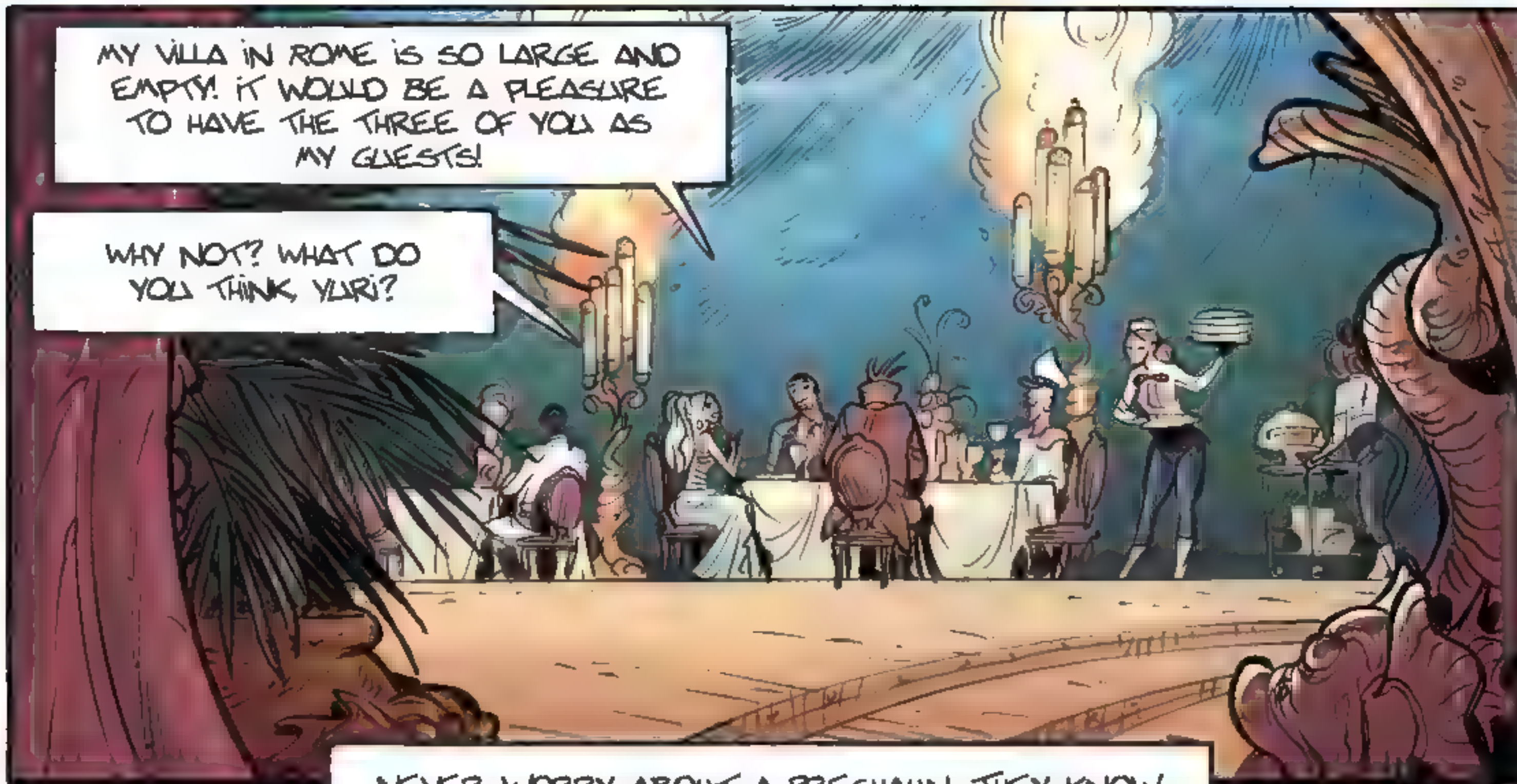
YES?





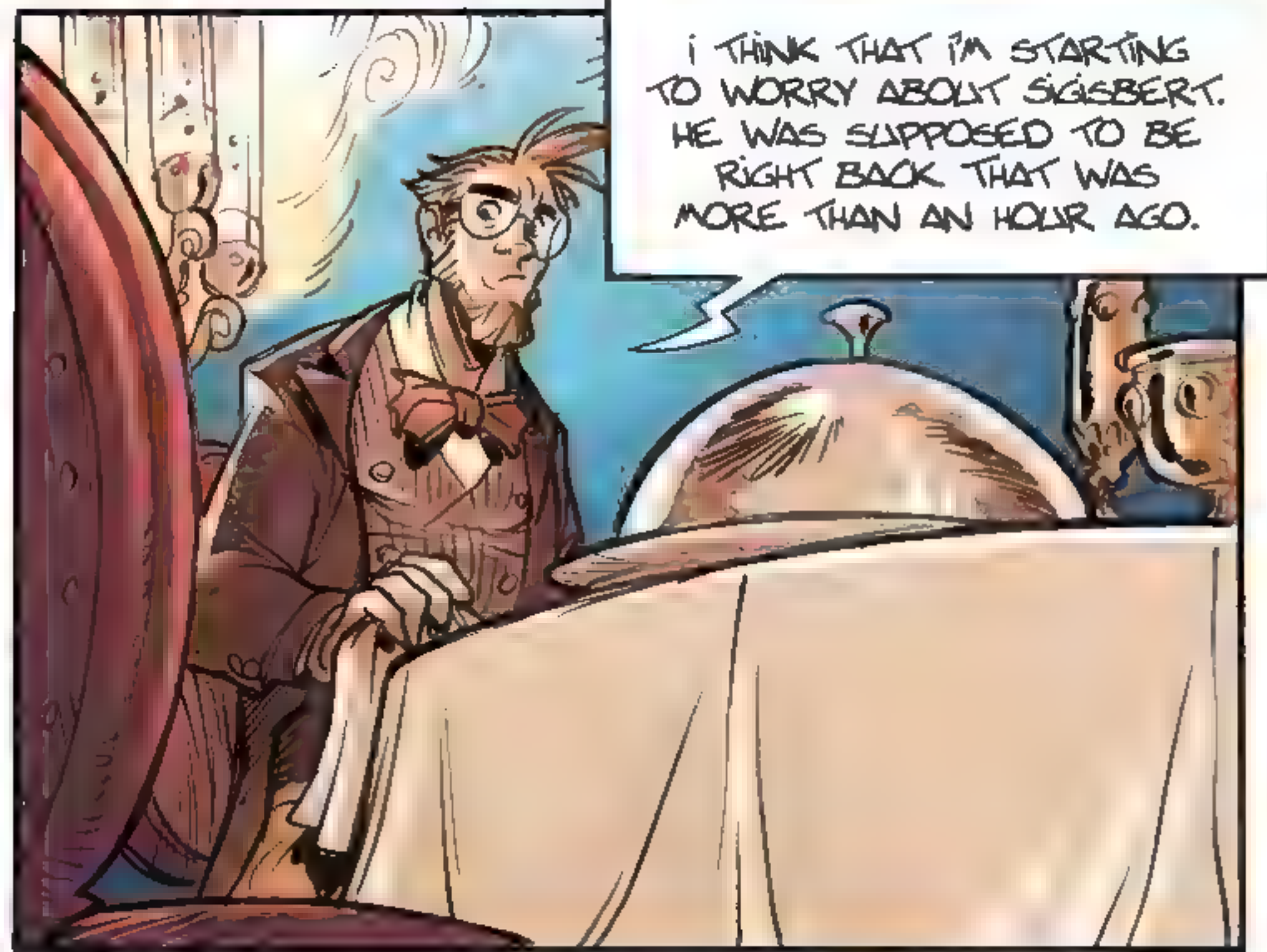


THE DINNER WAS DELICIOUS AND FRAN LITTERLY ADORABLE. HE WAS HITTING ON ME, OF COURSE, BUT THERE WAS NOTHING UNPLEASANT IN IT.



MY VILLA IN ROME IS SO LARGE AND EMPTY! IT WOULD BE A PLEASURE TO HAVE THE THREE OF YOU AS MY GUESTS!

WHY NOT? WHAT DO YOU THINK YURI?

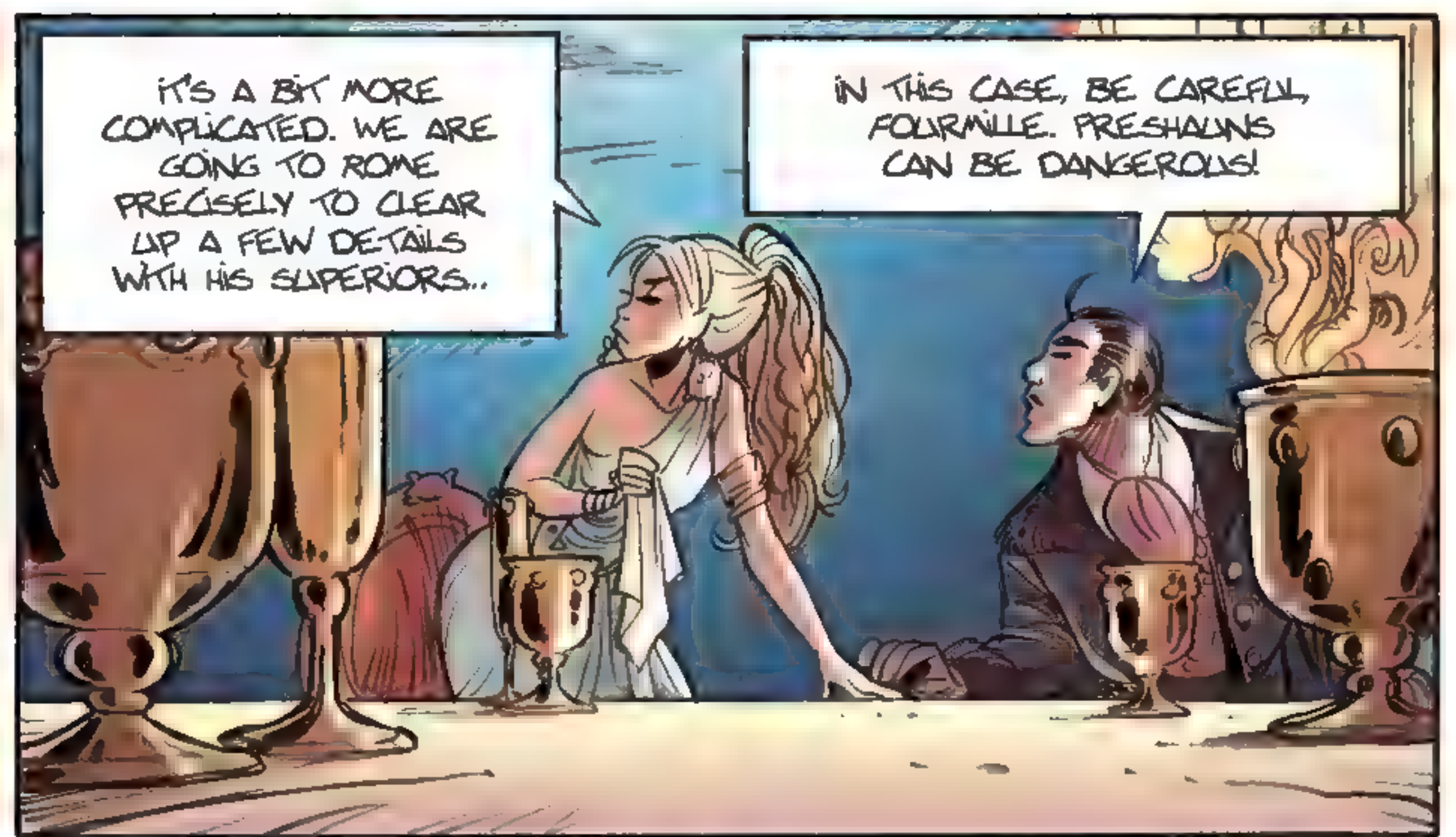


I THINK THAT I'M STARTING TO WORRY ABOUT SIGSBERT. HE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE RIGHT BACK THAT WAS MORE THAN AN HOUR AGO.



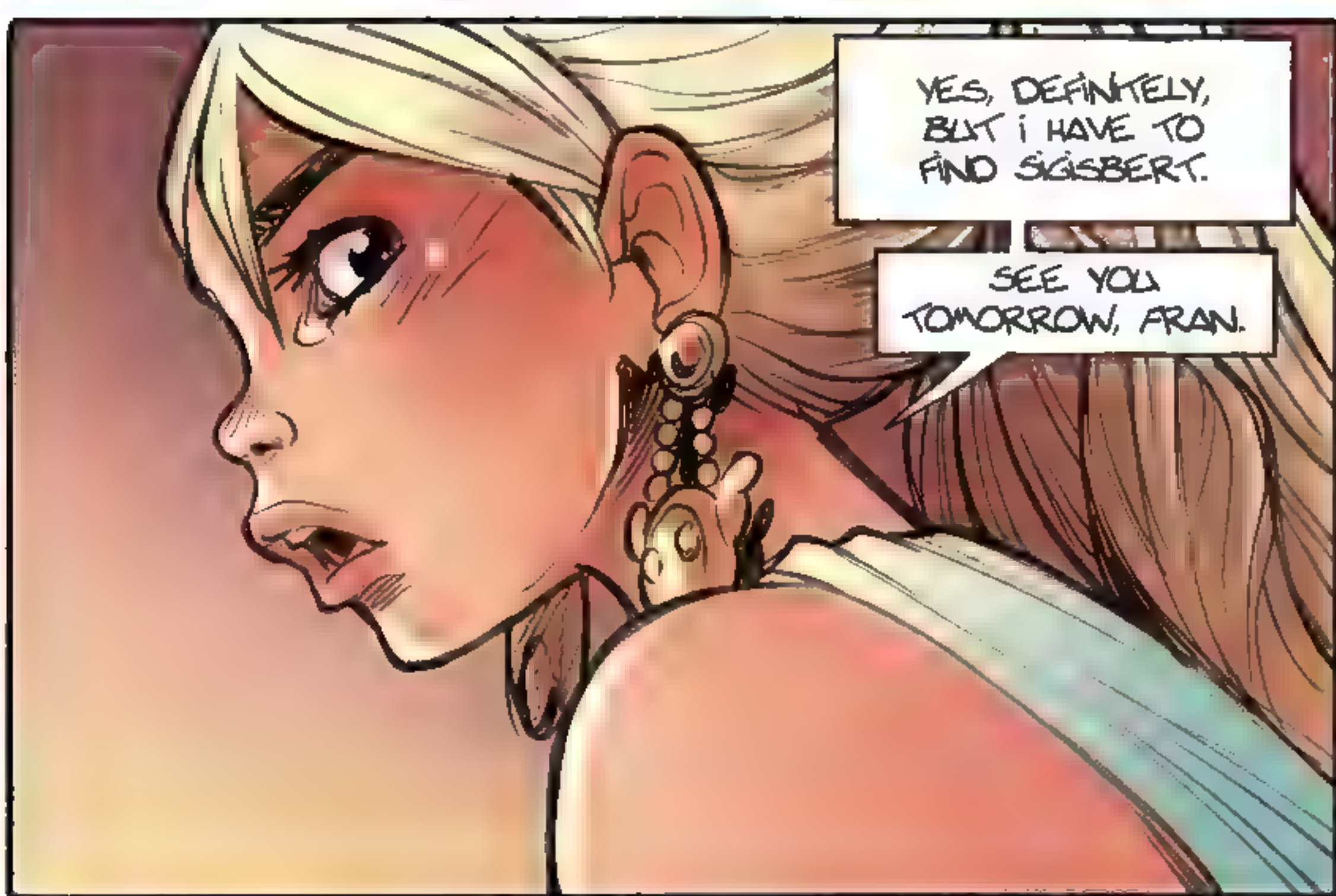
NEVER WORRY ABOUT A PRESHALIN. THEY KNOW WHAT THEY ARE DOING. I'M SURE YOUR FRIEND HAS A REALLY GOOD REASON TO BE LATE.

MHHH...



IT'S A BIT MORE COMPLICATED. WE ARE GOING TO ROME PRECISELY TO CLEAR UP A FEW DETAILS WITH HIS SUPERIORS...

IN THIS CASE, BE CAREFUL, FOURMILLE. PRESHALINS CAN BE DANGEROUS!



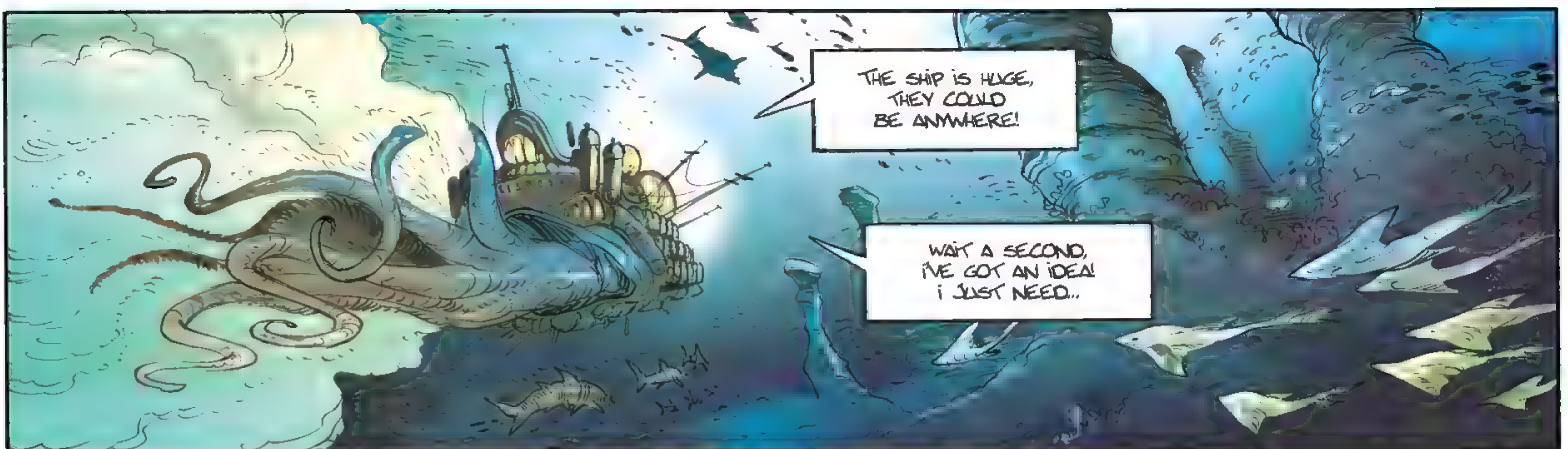
YES, DEFINITELY, BUT I HAVE TO FIND SIGSBERT.

SEE YOU TOMORROW, FRAN.



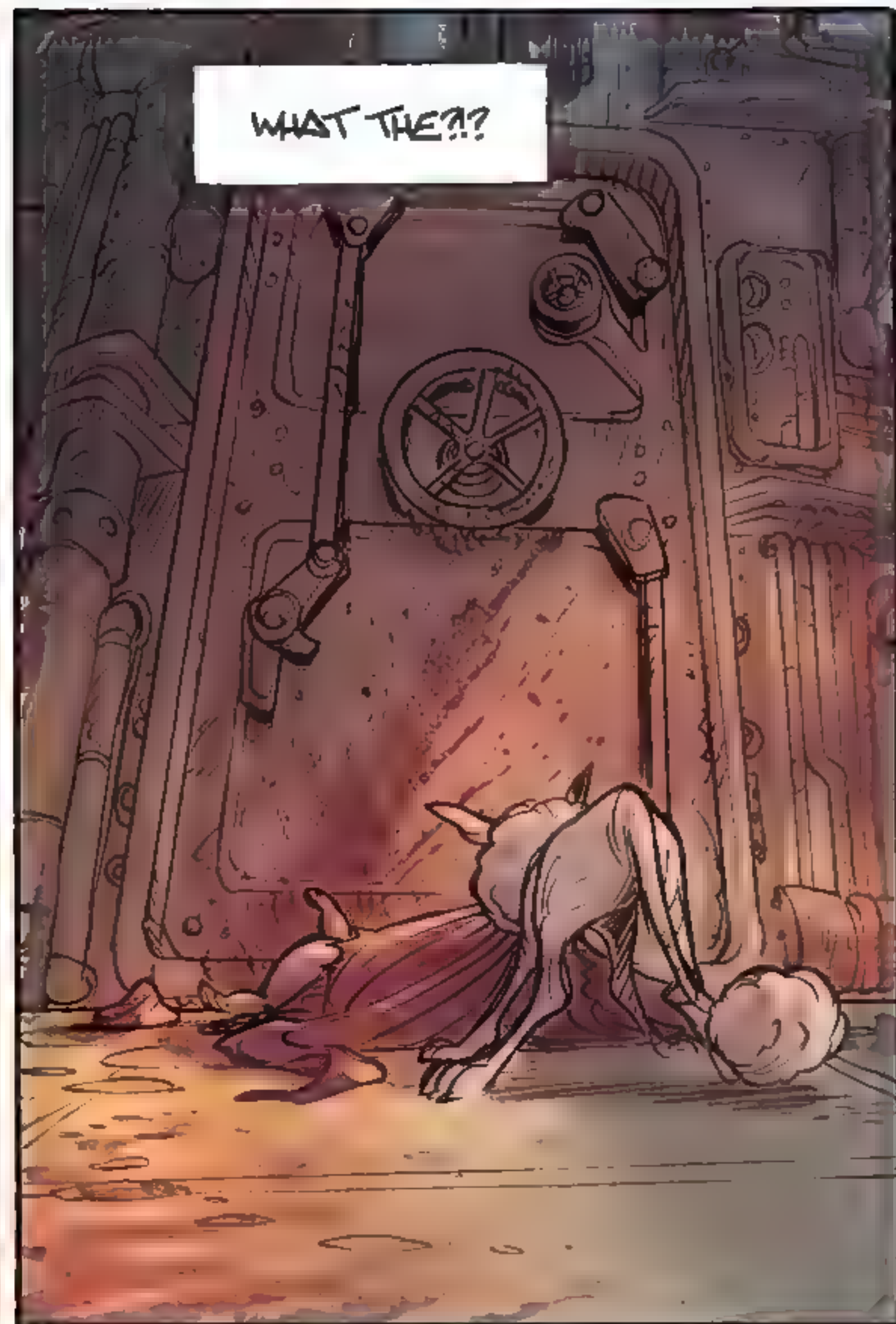
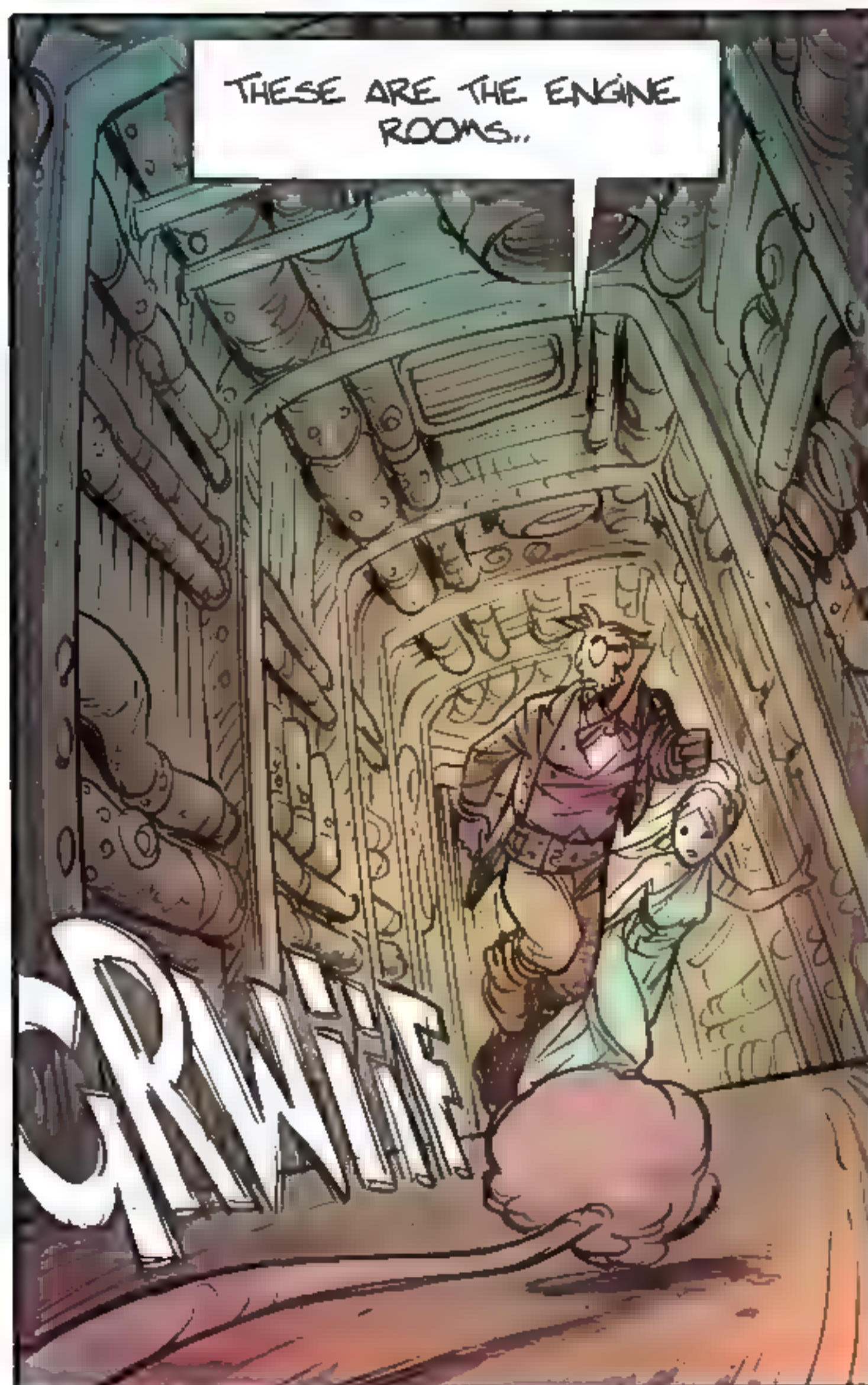
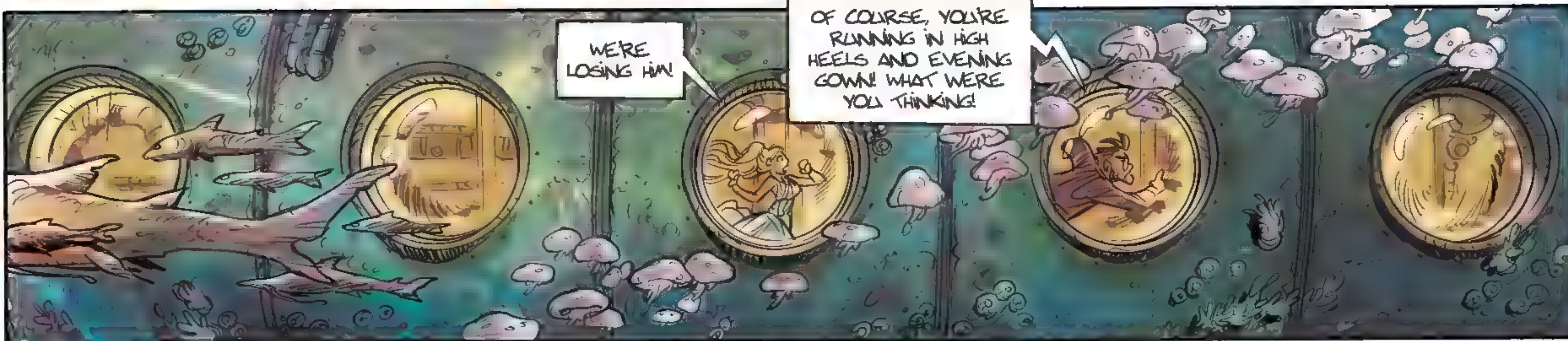
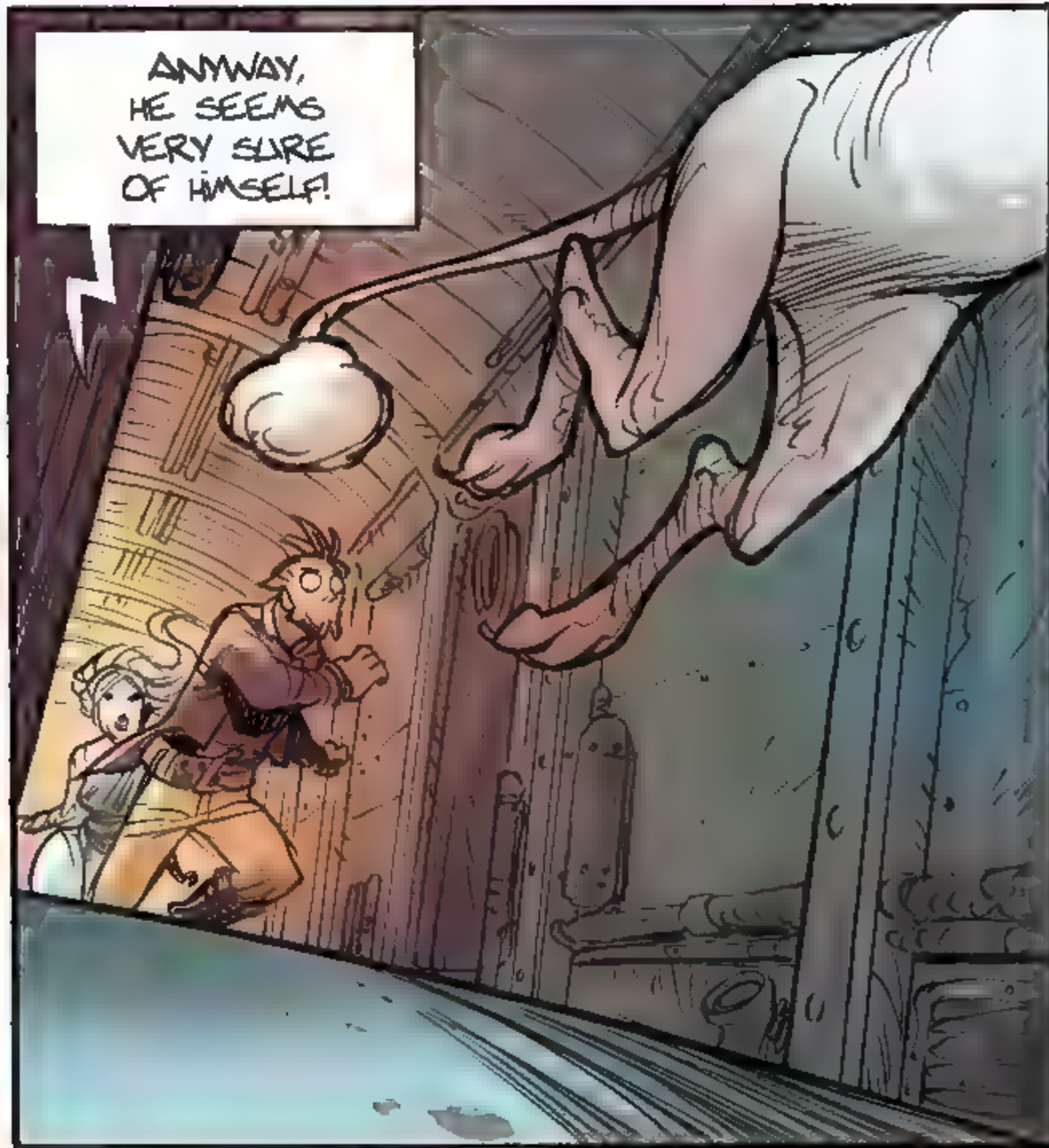
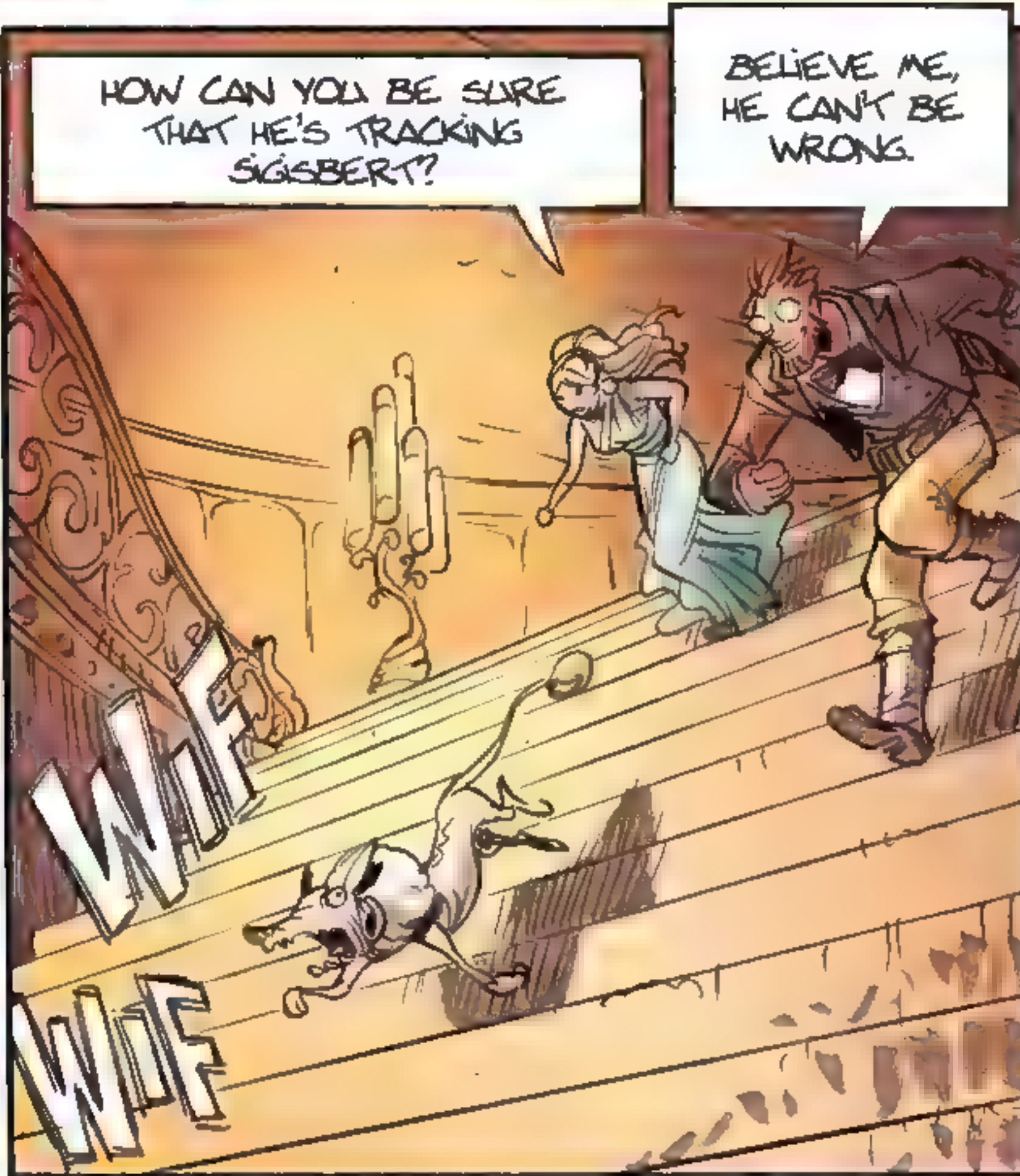
DID HE SAY WHY HE WENT AWAY?

NO, BUT THERE WAS ANOTHER PRESHALIN WHO WAS STARING AT US...



THE SHIP IS HUGE, THEY COULD BE ANYWHERE!

WAIT A SECOND, I'VE GOT AN IDEA! I JUST NEED...





MMMM?



CALM DOWN
AF!

WOOF!
WEEF!



YOU'RE HURT!

I'M FINE, IT'S
ALL RIGHT.



BUT, THIS
BLOOD...

I'M FINE,
I'M TELLING YOU

THIS IS AN AIRLOCK THAT
OPENS ON THE OUTSIDE...
IT'S BEEN ACTIVATED.



YOU NEED TO
TELL US WHAT
HAPPENED!

ABSOLUTELY
NOTHING!

AND, BY THE WAY,
I DON'T REMEMBER
ANYTHING.



I'D LIKE TO GO BACK
TO MY CABIN TO TAKE
A SHOWER AND GET
SOME REST.

AND HAVE A CUP OF
TEA. MANY CUPS OF
TEA. LITERS OF TEA.



WE COULDN'T GET HIM
TO SAY A WORD ABOUT
WHAT HAPPENED.

THE BLOOD ON THE AIRLOCK WAS FOUND,
BUT NONE OF THE PASSENGERS OR
CREW WERE MISSING. THE CAPTAIN
DIDN'T CONDUCT FURTHER INVESTIGATION.
NO ONE NOTICED THE ABSENCE OF
THE CREEPY FRESHLIN WHO HAD LANDED
ON THE SHIP.

ROME IS BIG BUT MOST OF ITS STREETS ARE NARROW. SO, SMART PEOPLE DON'T HAVE HUGE CARS.

TWUUT
TWETT

GET OUT OF THE WAY

À STRONZO!!

MA VAFFANCULO!!

WHY DOES EVERYBODY HAVE TO SHOUT?

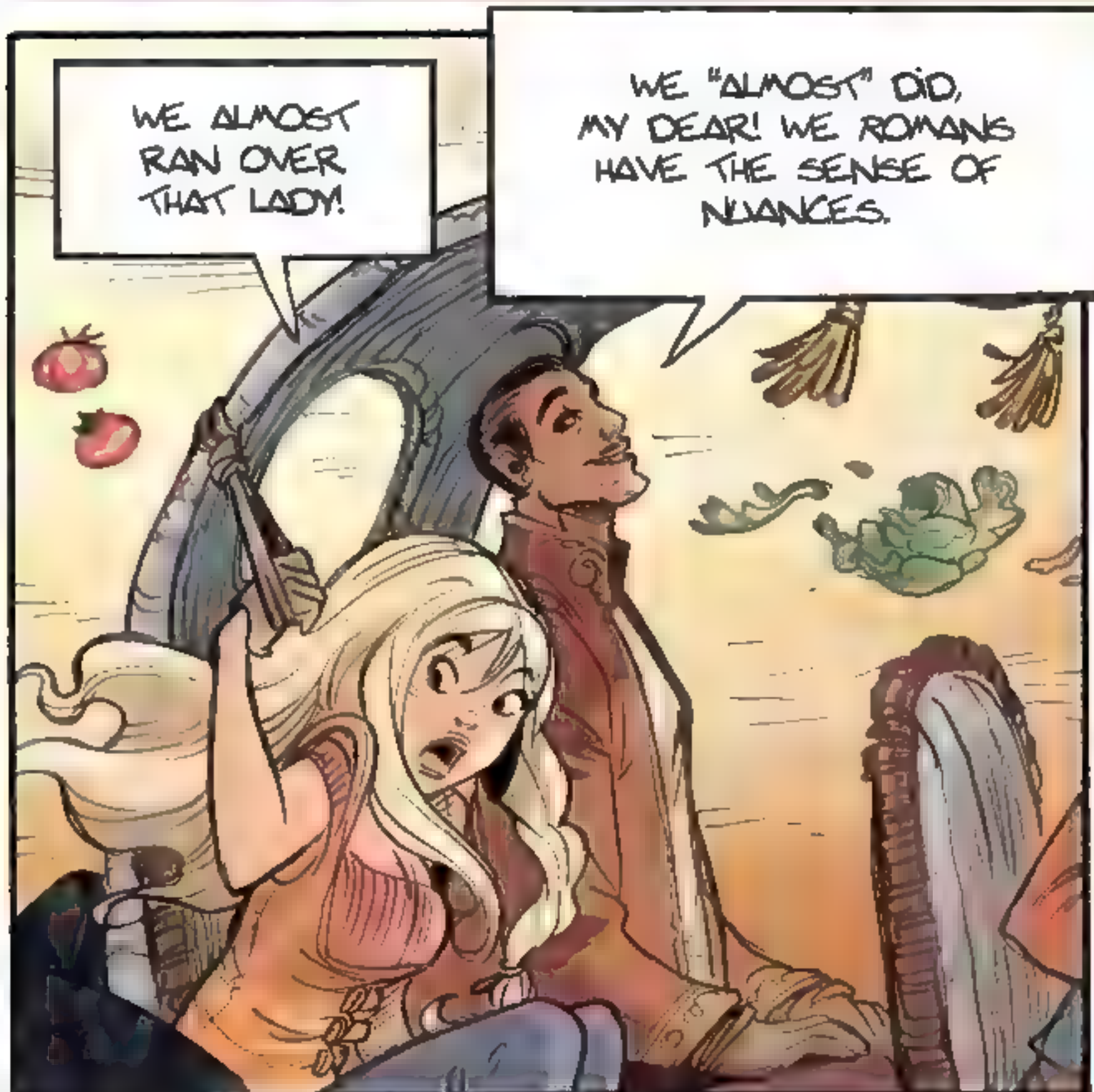
IT'S A TRADITION.

ON EXHO, THE FIAT 500 IS A FUNNY BUG WHILE THE VESPA SCOOTER LEAVES A POOP TRAIL BEHIND IT. BUT YOU'D RECOGNIZE THEM WITHOUT A DOUBT.

A TRAFFIC JAM WITHOUT INSULTS IS LIKE A TOMATO SAUCE WITHOUT BASIL

OH, TRAFFIC'S CLEARING UP!

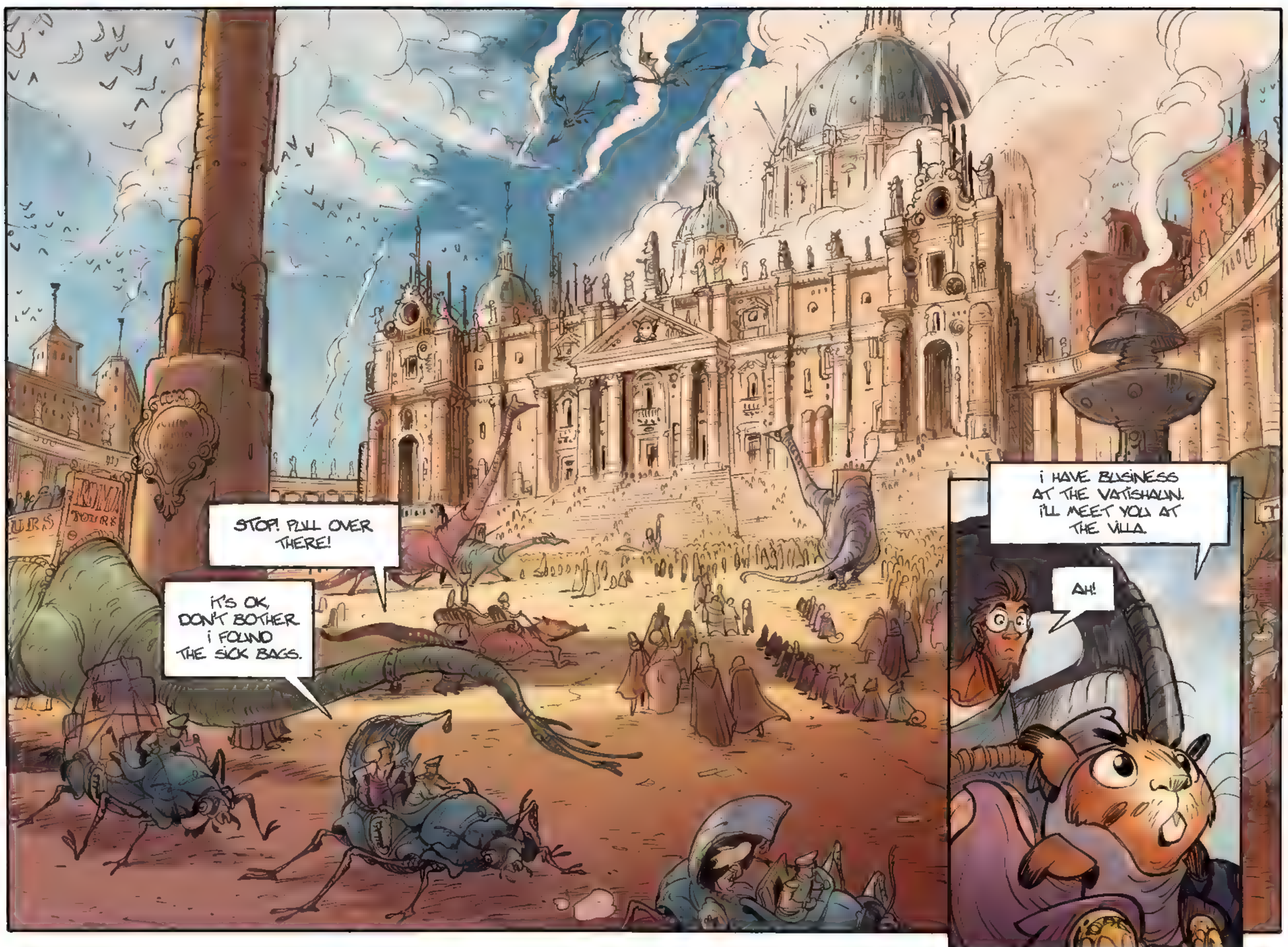
COJONE!
VACCAGARE!



WE "ALMOST" DID, MY DEAR! WE ROMANS HAVE THE SENSE OF NUANCES.



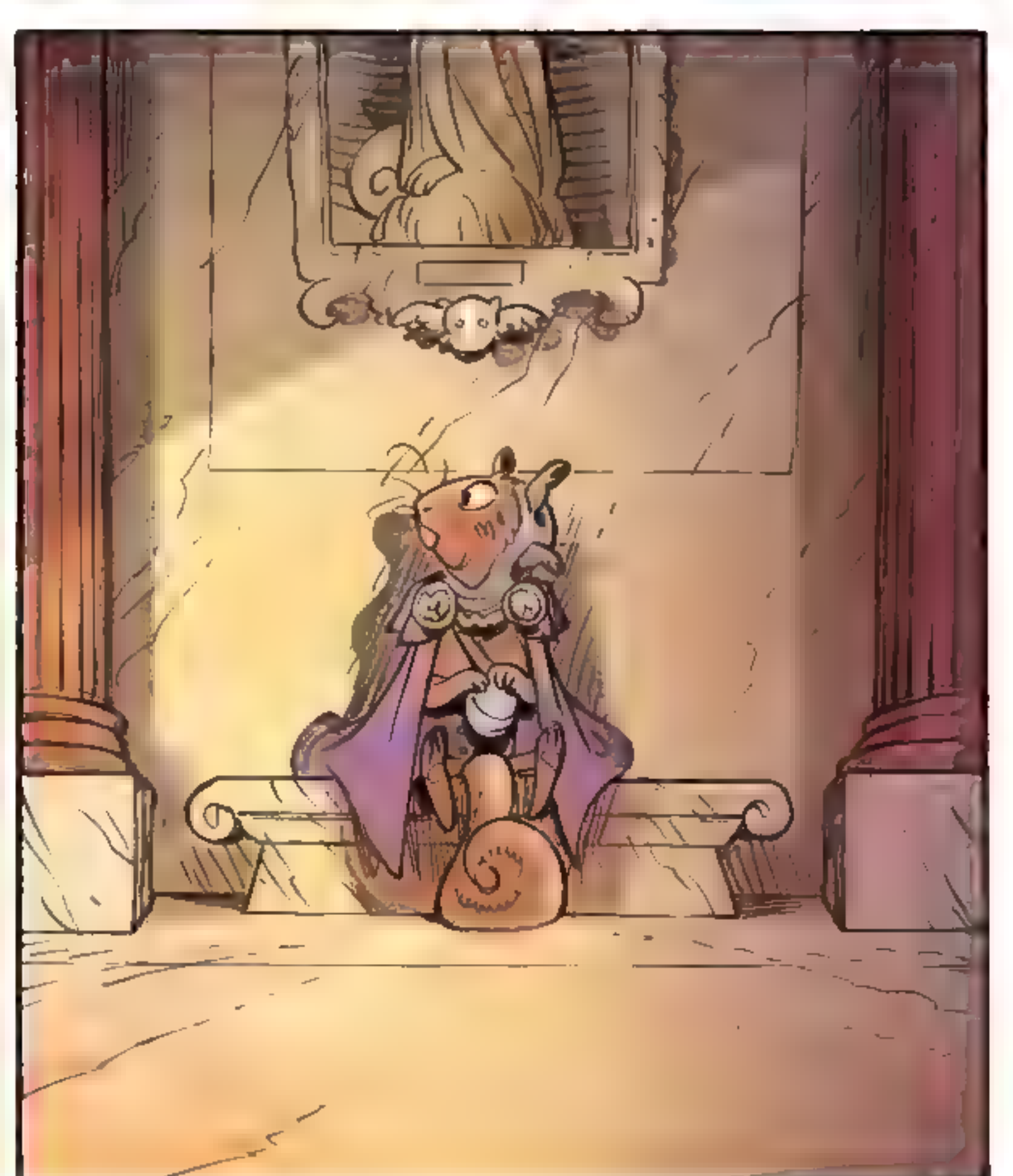
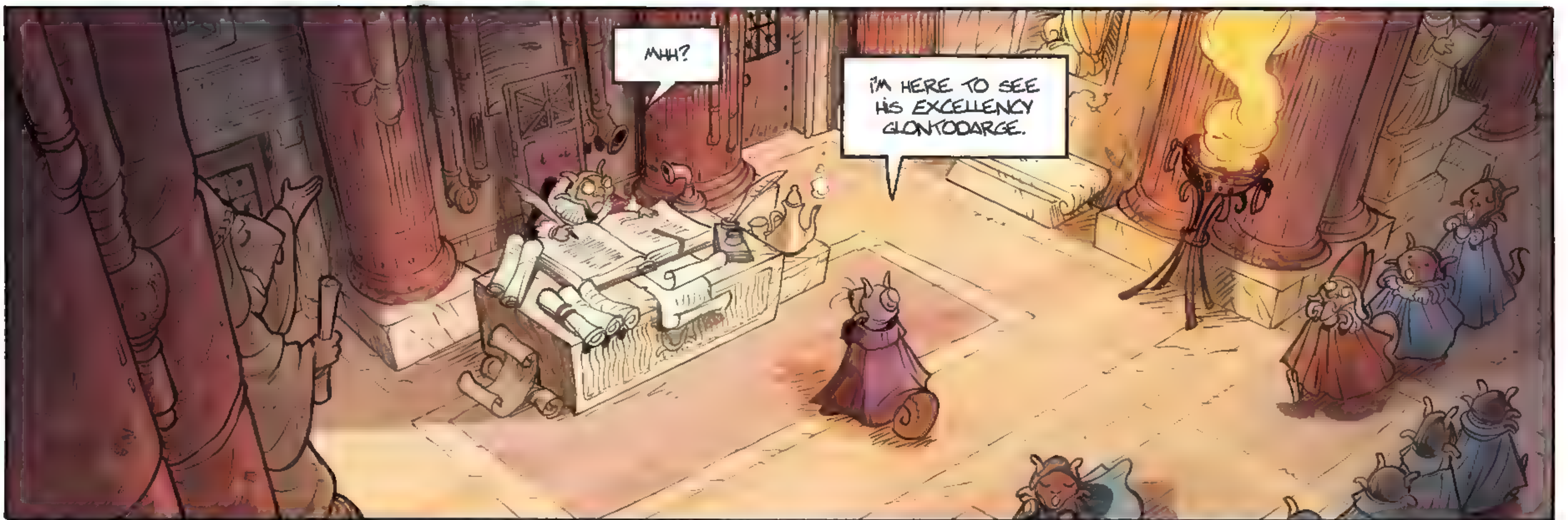
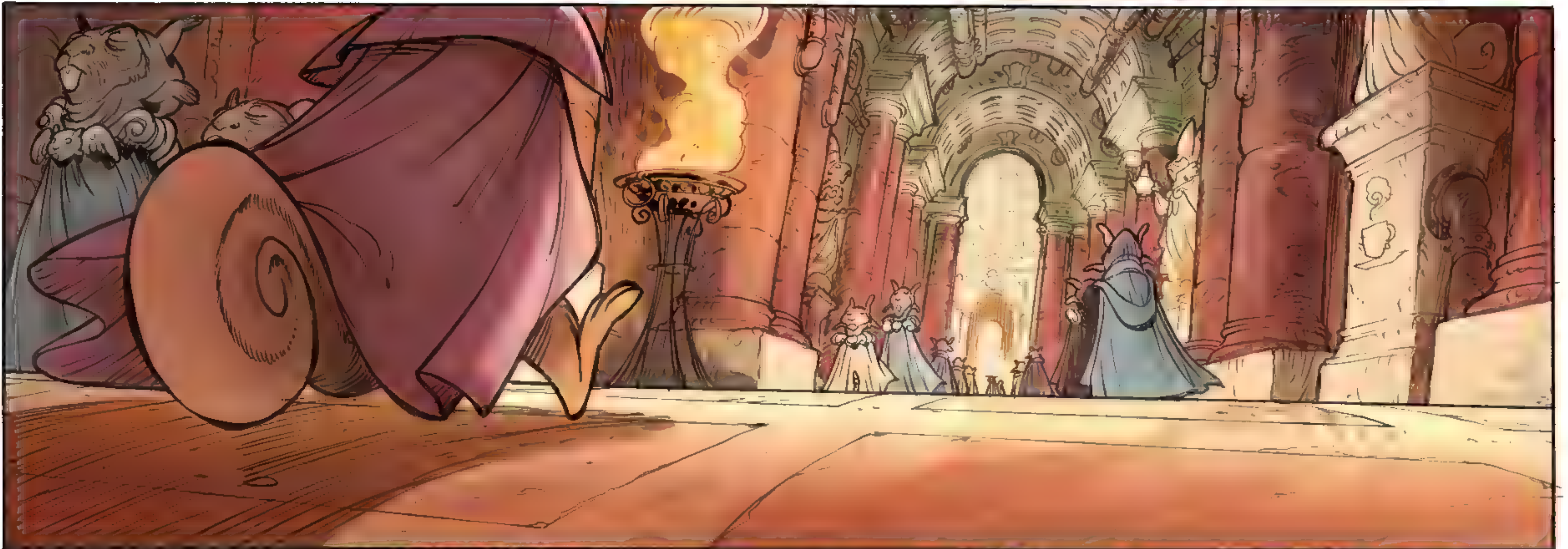
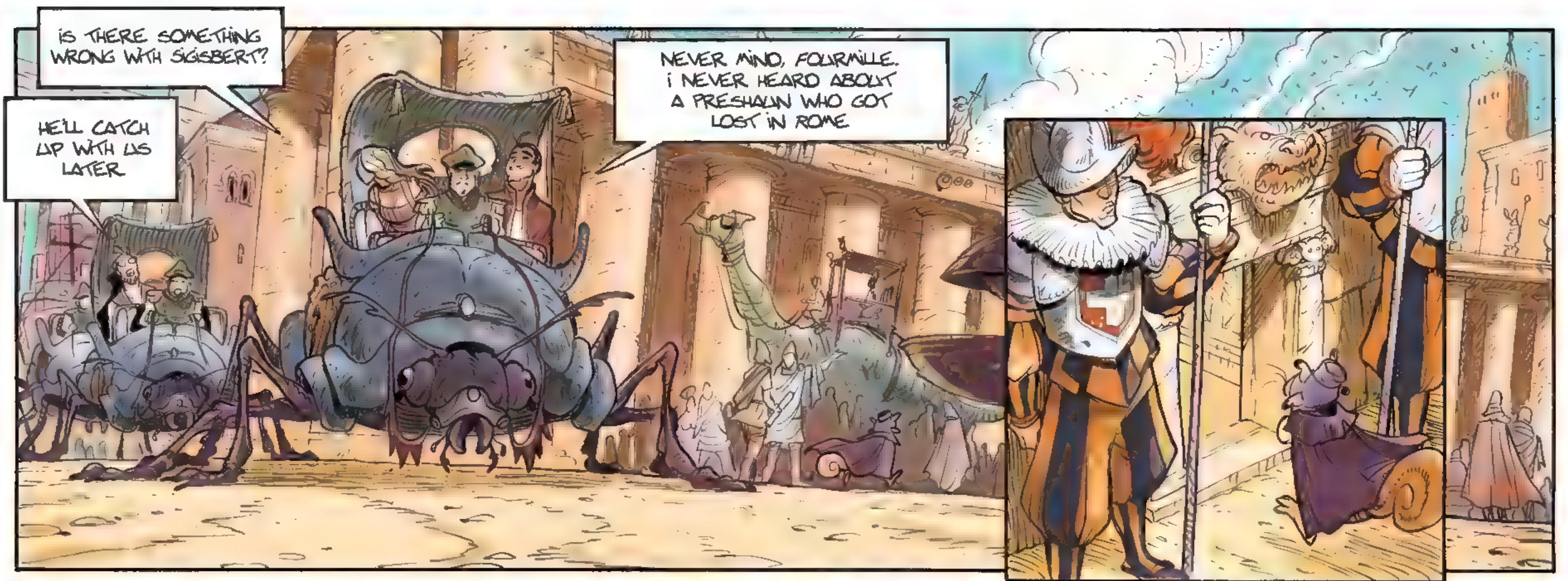
YOU GET USED TO IT...

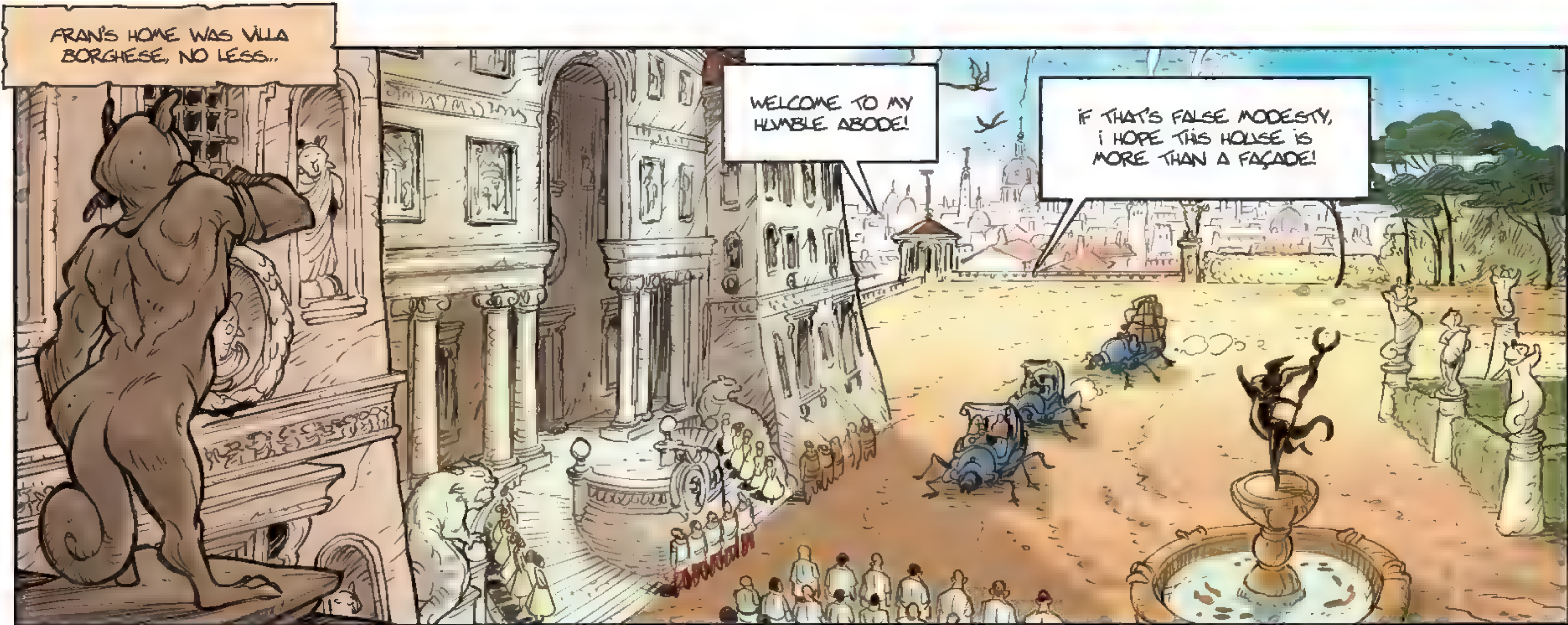


IT'S OK, DON'T BOTHER I FOUND THE SICK BAGS.

I HAVE BUSINESS AT THE VATISHAUN. I'LL MEET YOU AT THE VILLA.



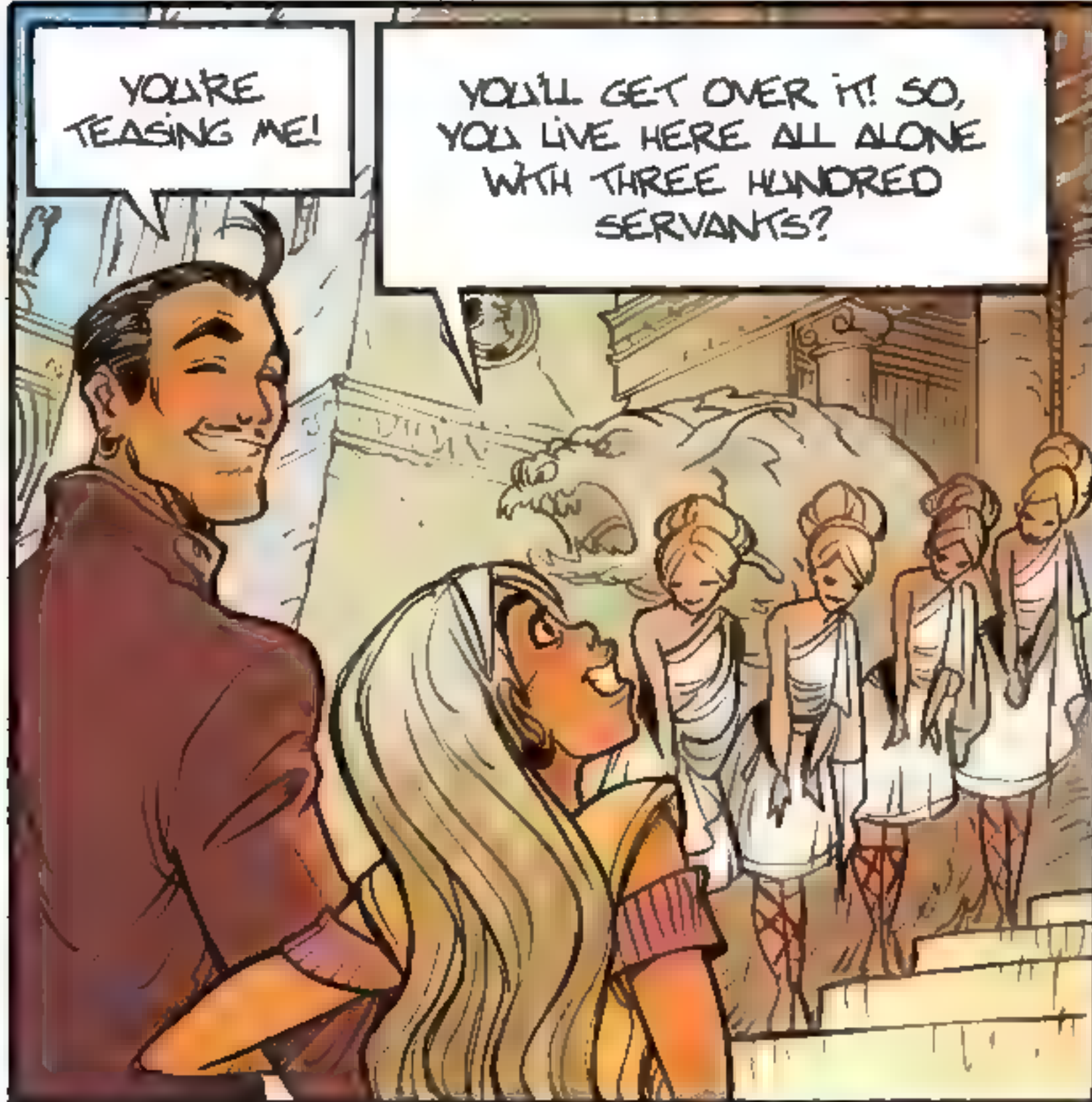




FRAN'S HOME WAS VILLA BORGHESE, NO LESS...

WELCOME TO MY HUMBLE ABODE!

IF THAT'S FALSE MODESTY, I HOPE THIS HOUSE IS MORE THAN A FAÇADE!



YOU'RE TEASING ME!

YOU'LL GET OVER IT! SO, YOU LIVE HERE, ALL ALONE WITH THREE HUNDRED SERVANTS?



YES, AND THIS HOUSE WAS MISSING THE WARMTH AND THE LIGHT THAT A WONDERFUL CREATURE LIKE YOU CAN BRING.



AND BLAHBLAHBLAH AND BLAHBLAHBLAH...



THESE ARE YOUR APARTMENTS. EMILY WILL BE YOUR MAID. SHE JUST MOVED HERE FROM LONDON.

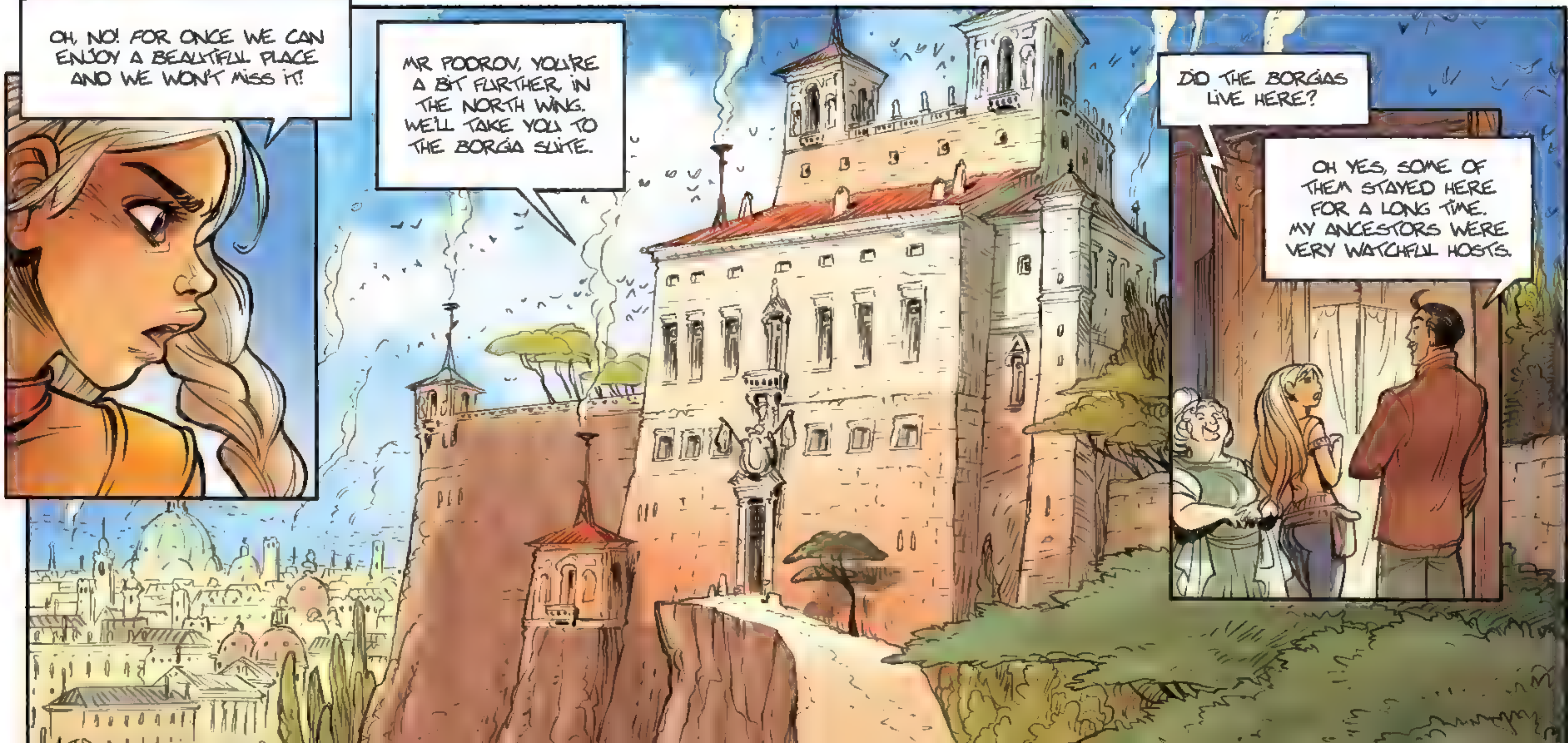
I CAN HANDLE MY CLOTHES VERY WELL BY MYSELF, YOU KNOW.



YOU DON'T WANT TO DEPRIVE POOR EMILY OF HER WORK, DO YOU? IT WOULD BE CRUEL!

I'LL BE RIGHT NEXT DOOR IF YOU NEED ME FOR ANYTHING.

FOURMILLE, WE SHOULD FIND OURSELVES A NICE LITTLE HOTEL...

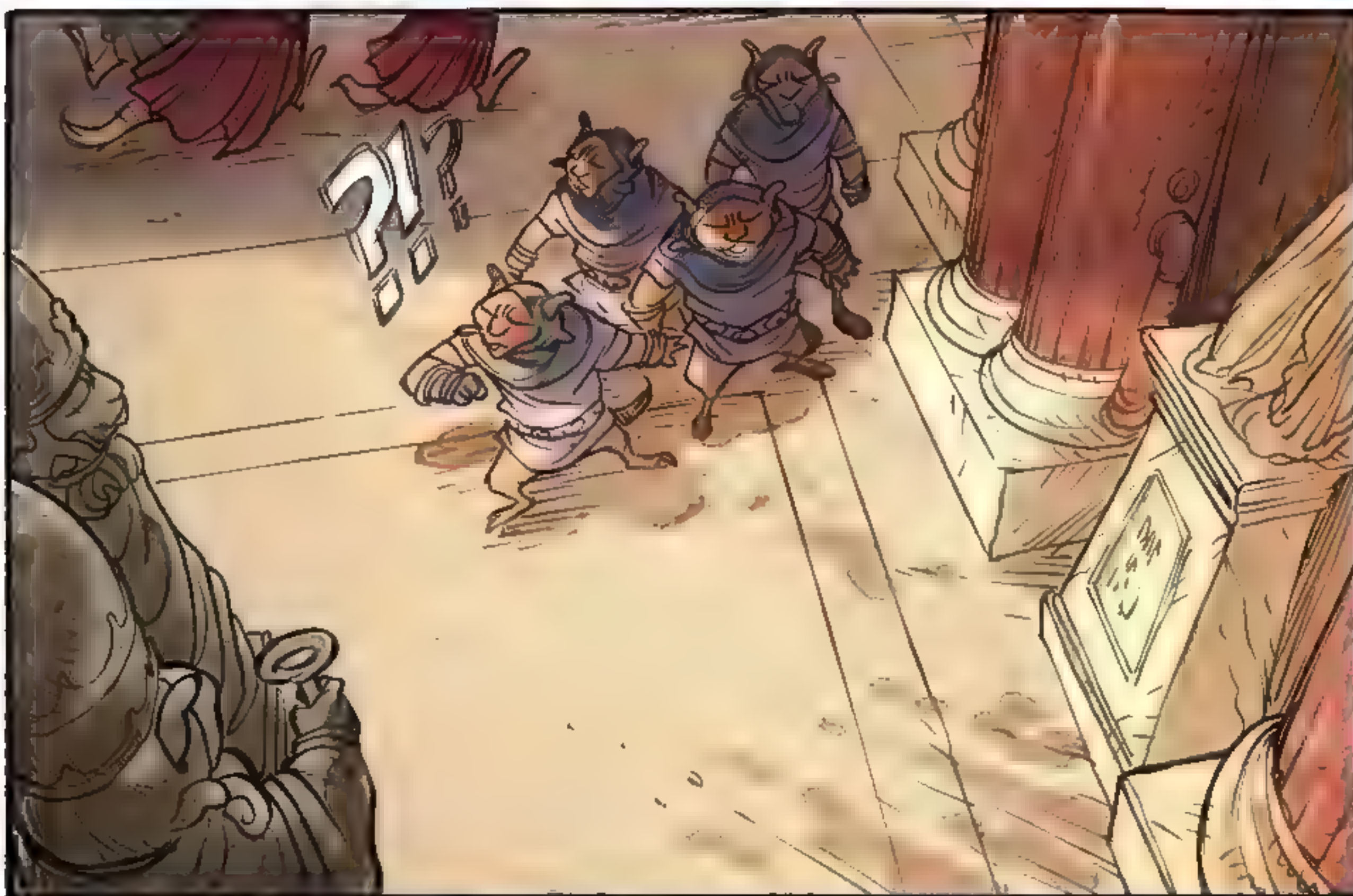
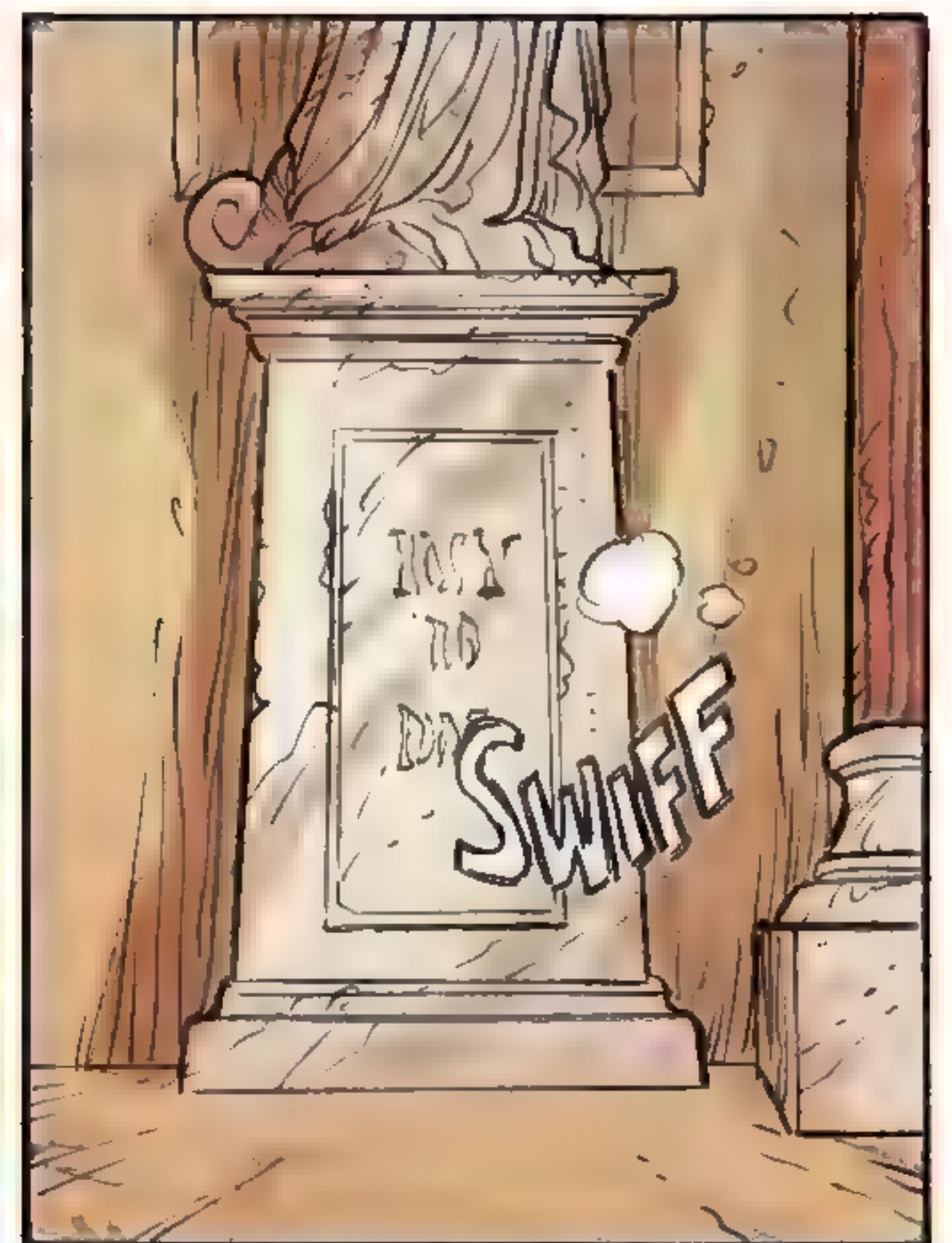
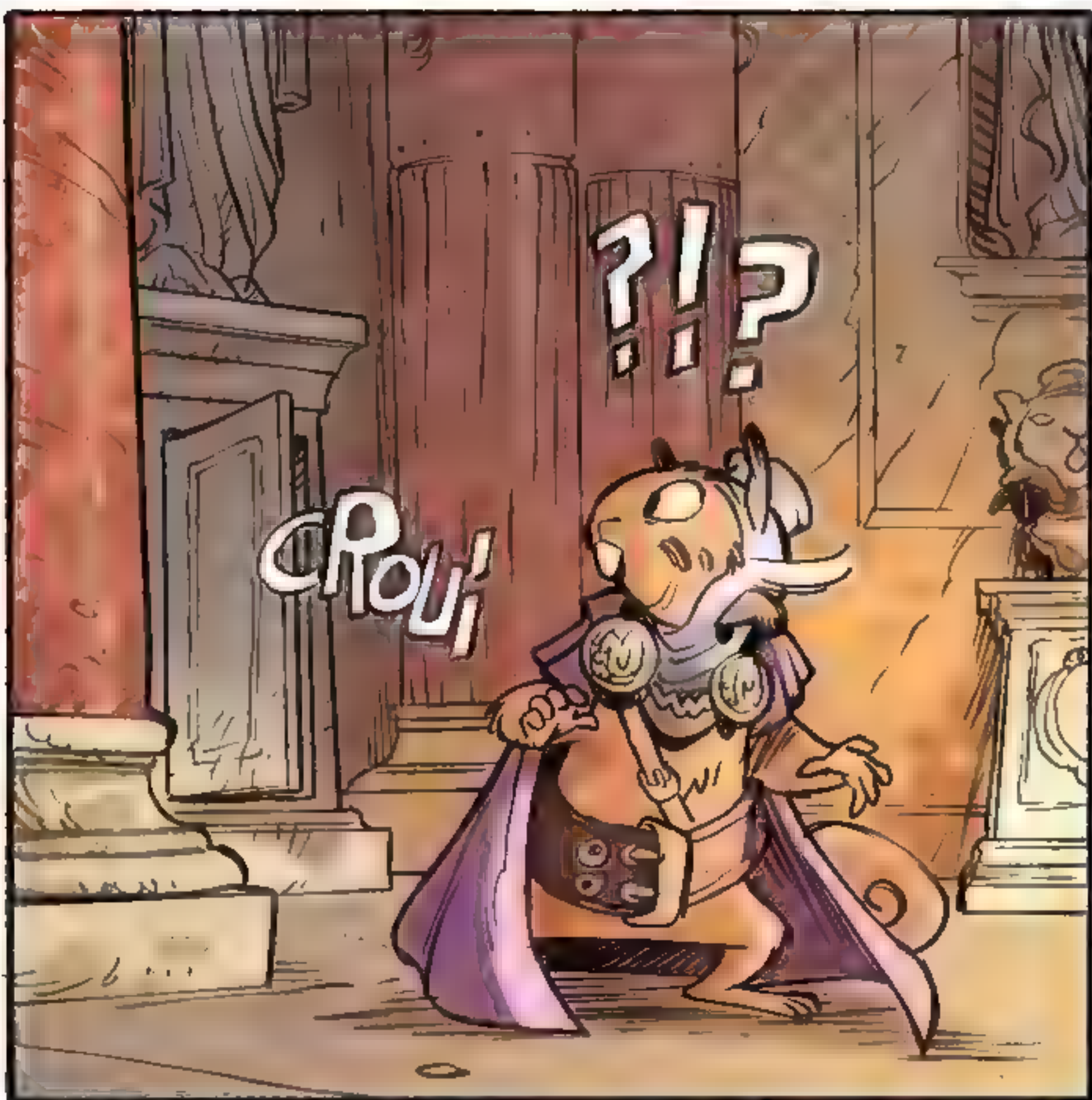
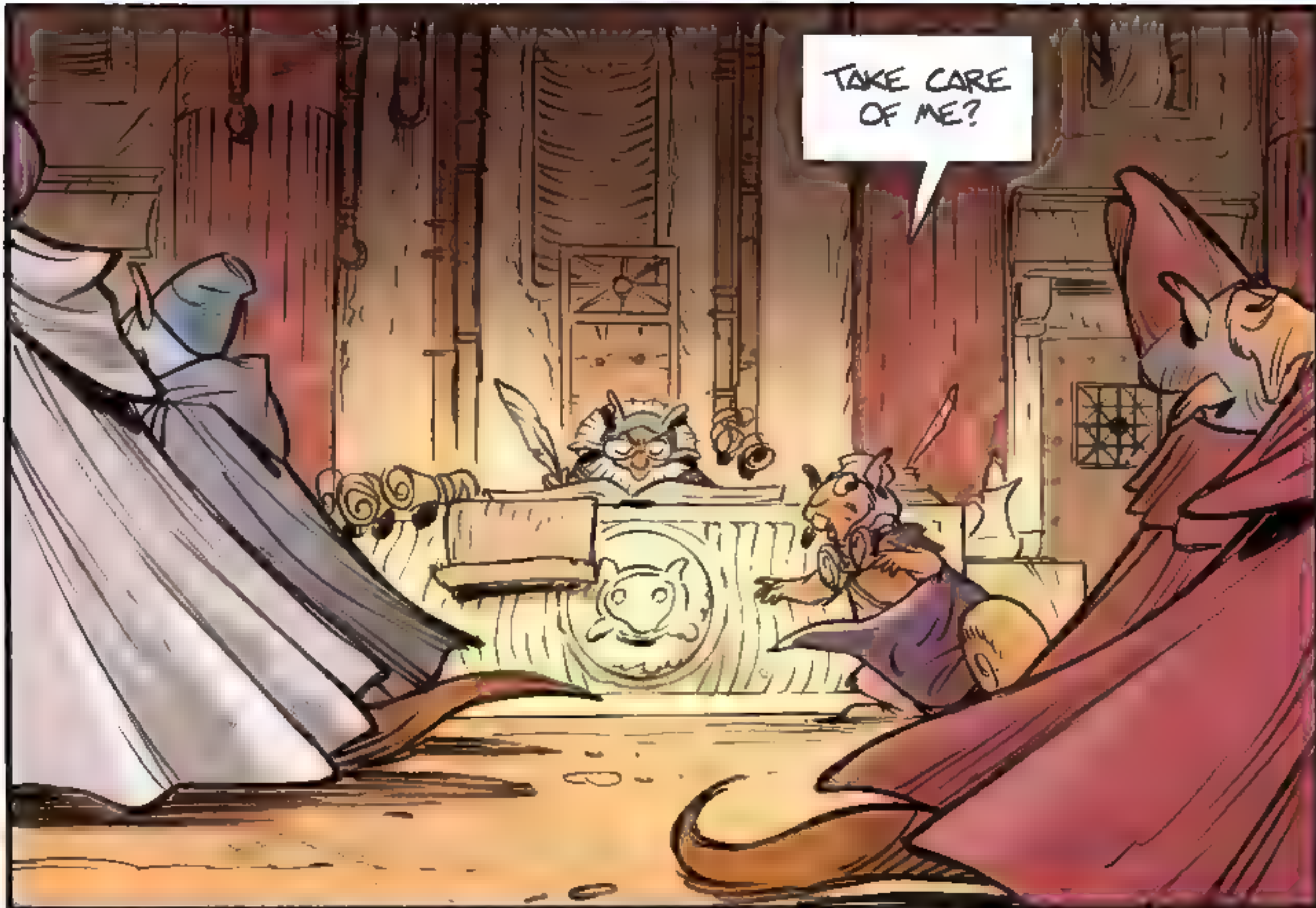


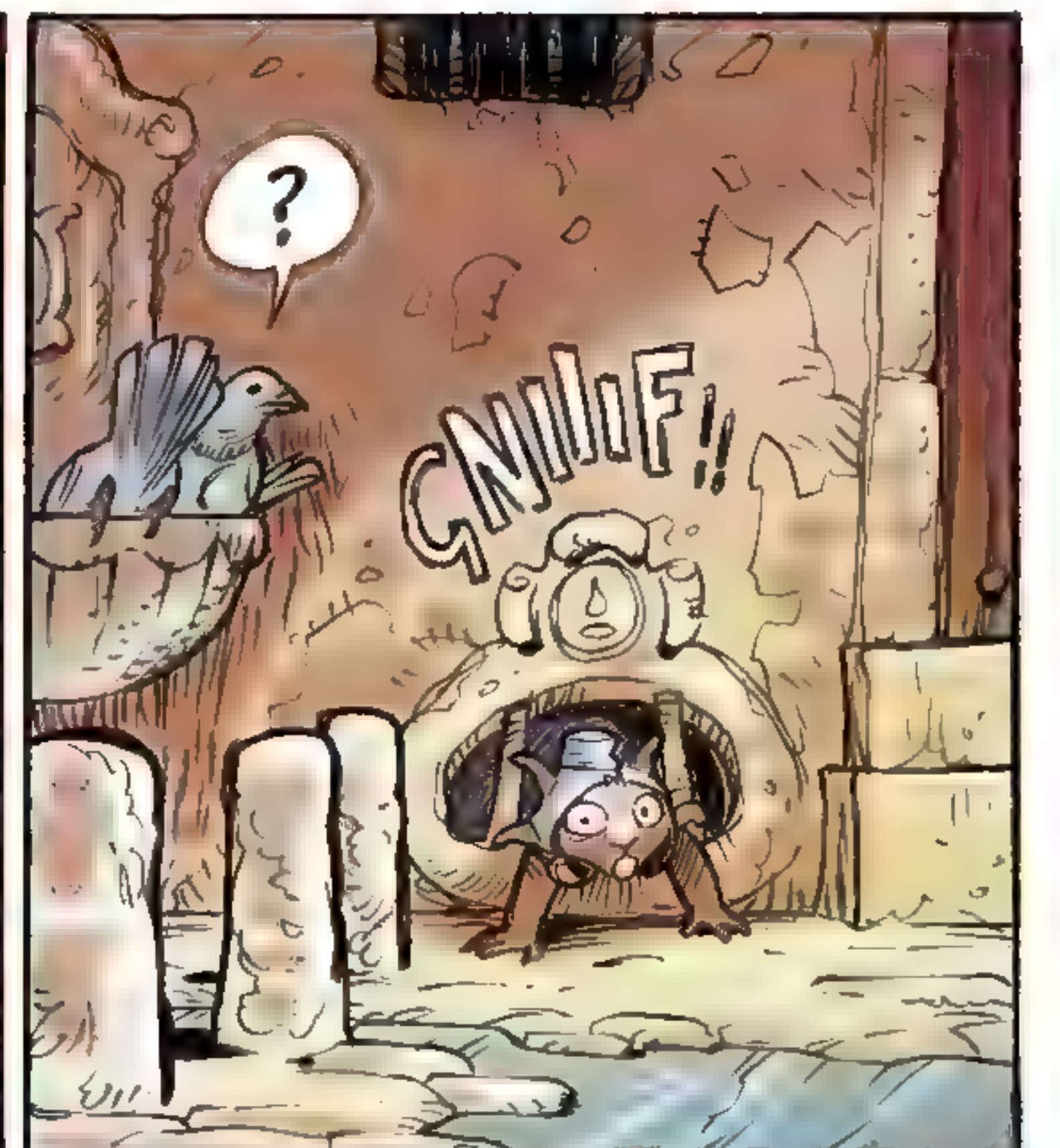
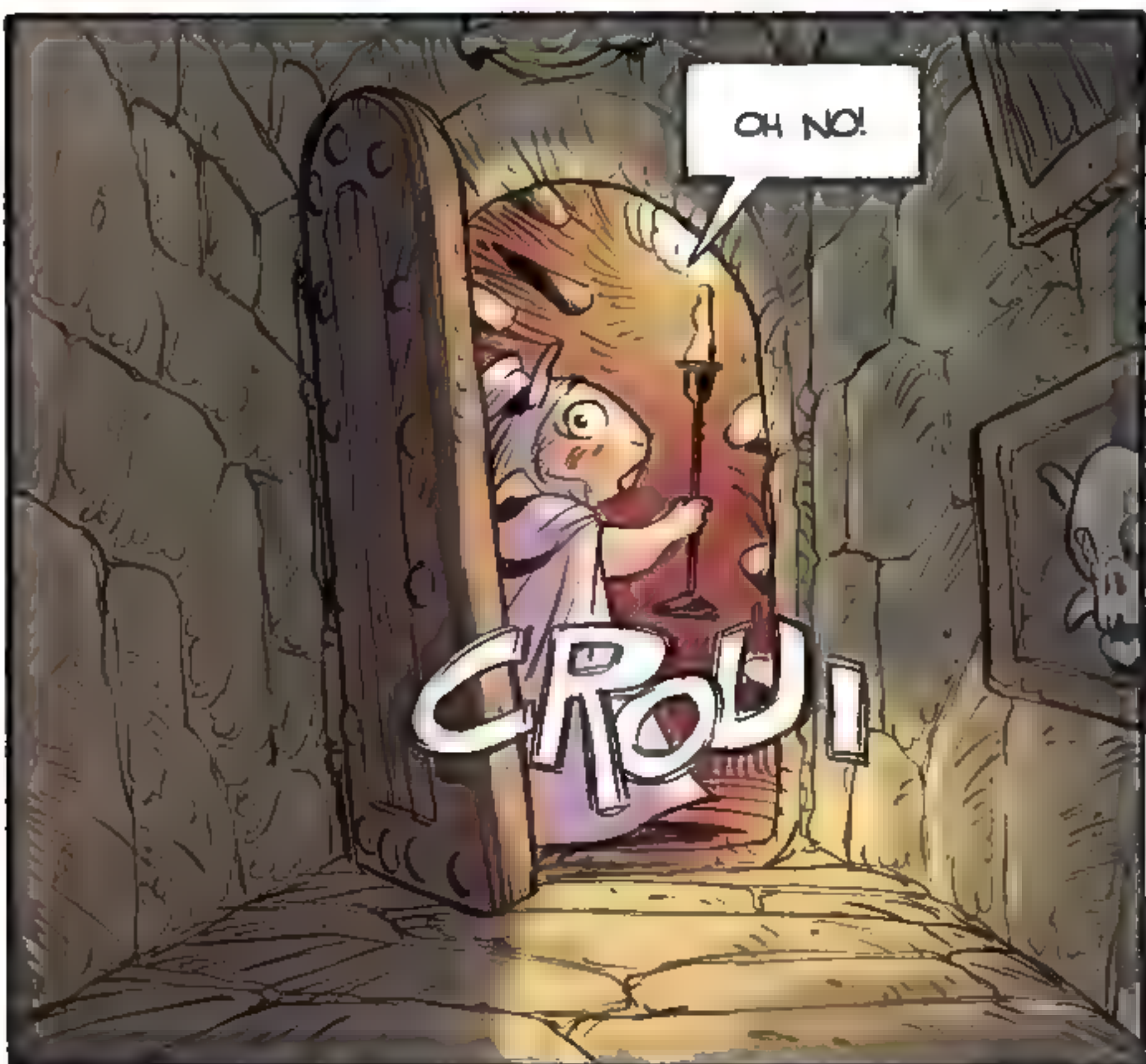
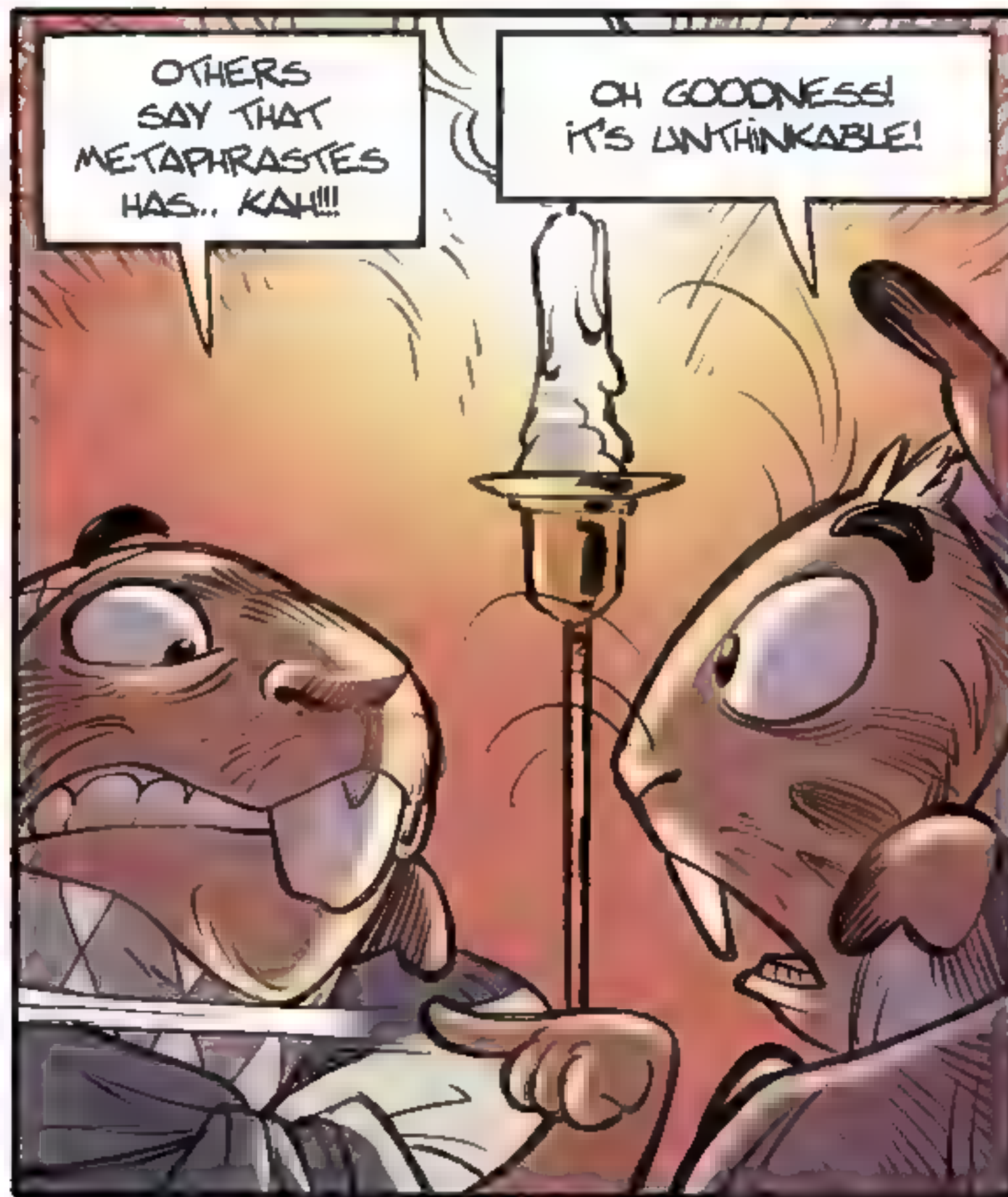
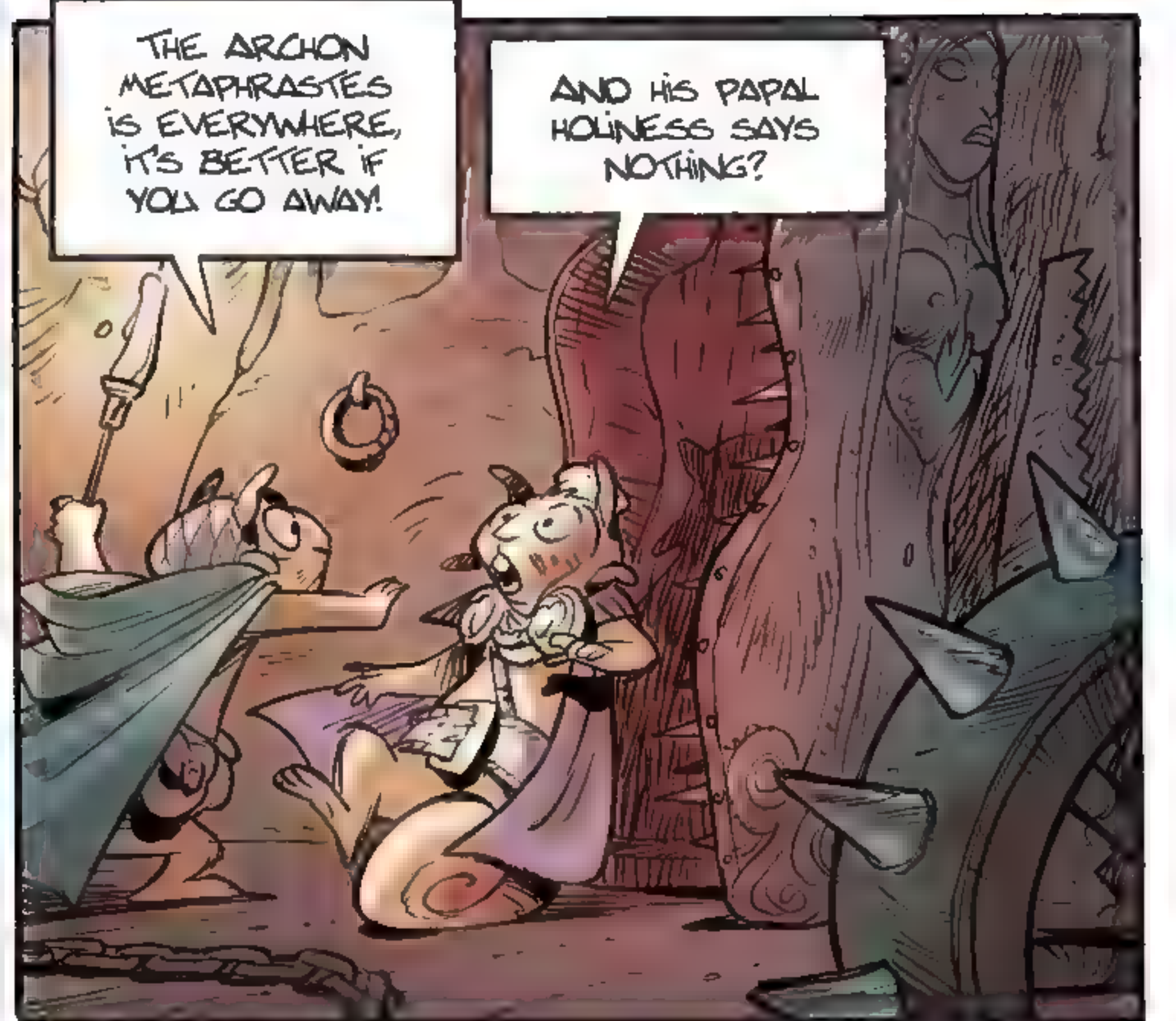
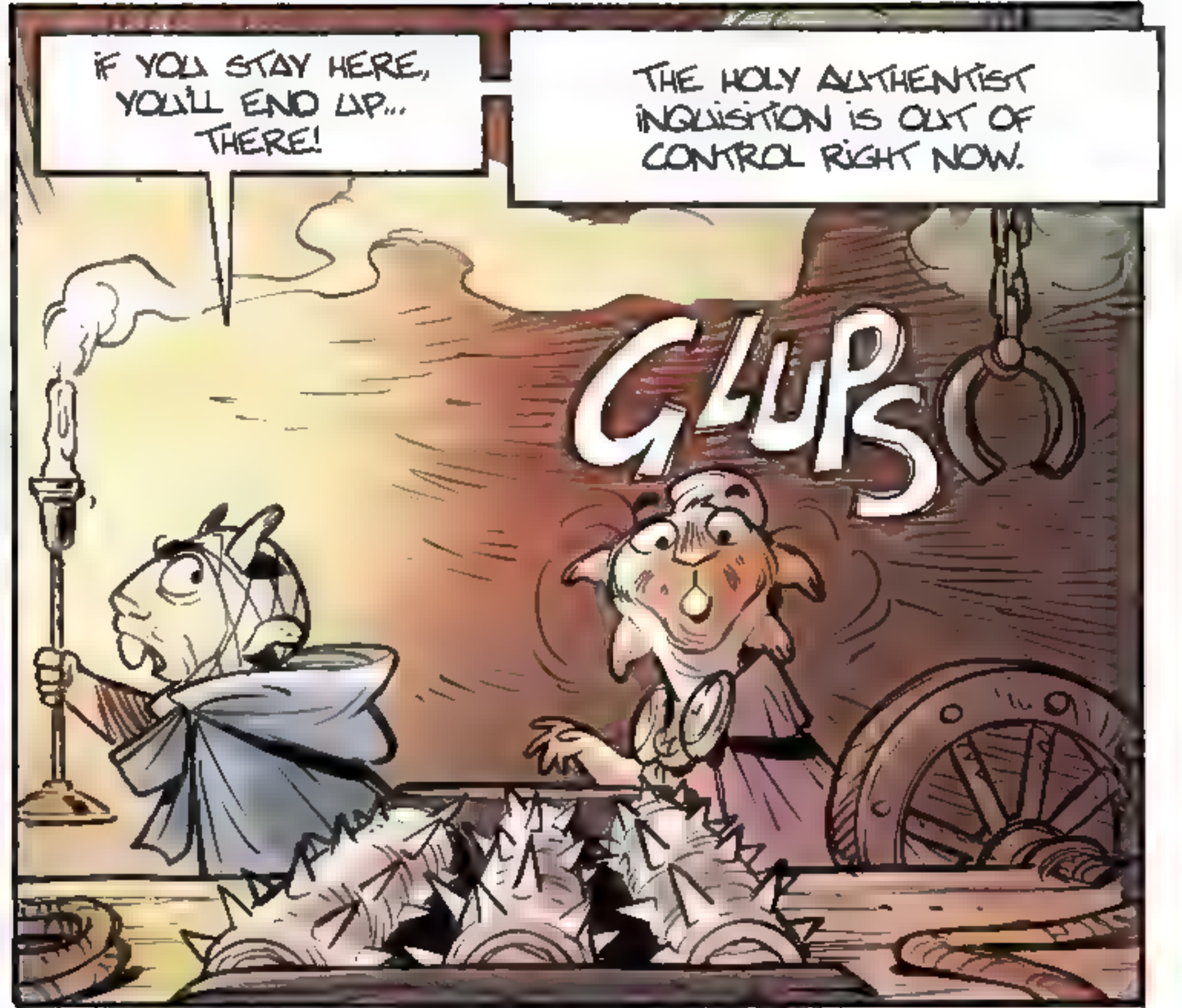
OH, NO! FOR ONCE WE CAN ENJOY A BEAUTIFUL PLACE AND WE WON'T MISS IT!

MR PODROV, YOU'RE A BIT FURTHER IN THE NORTH WING. WE'LL TAKE YOU TO THE BORGHESI SUITE.

DID THE BORGHIAS LIVE HERE?

OH YES, SOME OF THEM STAYED HERE FOR A LONG TIME. MY ANCESTORS WERE VERY WATCHFUL HOSTS.





WHERE DID HE GET ALL THESE GOWNS? MAYBE THEY WERE GIFTS FOR HIS EX-LOVERS?

OH NO, MADAM! THE COUNT HAD THEM DELIVERED JUST FOR YOU.

SOME CREATIONS FROM MILAN'S TOP FASHION DESIGNERS!

HE'S RICH! THE PALACE, THE GOWNS...

THE COUNT MADE A FORTUNE IN AIR TRANSPORT...

THE LOW-COST COMPANY OF DRAGONS, BORG-AIR, YOU KNOW?

IT LOOKS VERY GOOD ON YOU! SO, YOU JUST GOT HERE TO EKHO?

NEWS TRAVELS FAST!

OH, STAFF GOSSIP, YOU KNOW... THEY SAY YOU SAVED PARIS FROM A SERIOUS ATTACK AND THAT YOU DID WONDERS IN HOLLYWOOD, DIDN'T YOU?

YOU ARE VERY CURIOUS, EMILY!

I'M SORRY!

OH, THE BELL! THE COUNT IS WAITING FOR YOU DOWNSTAIRS!

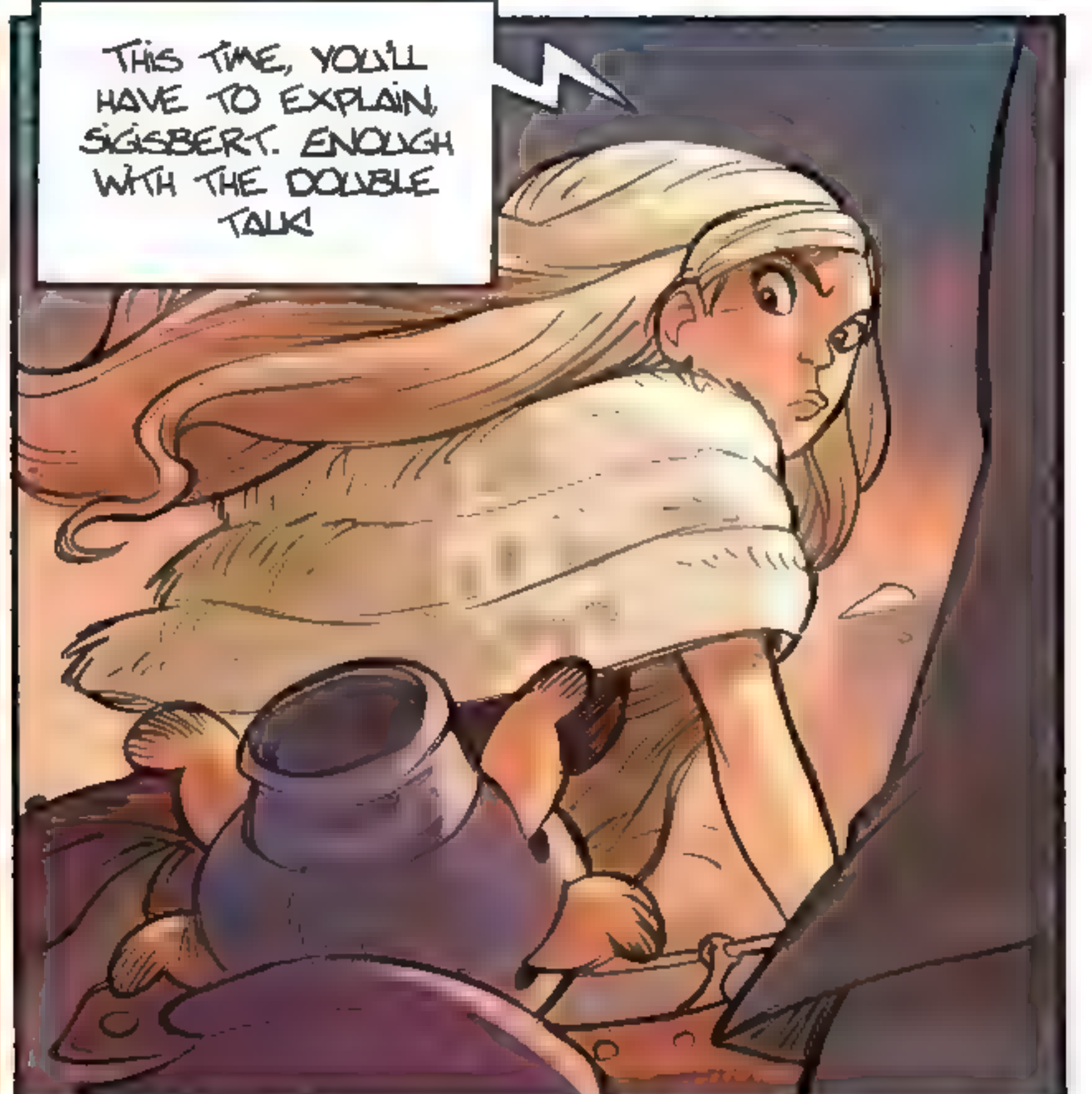
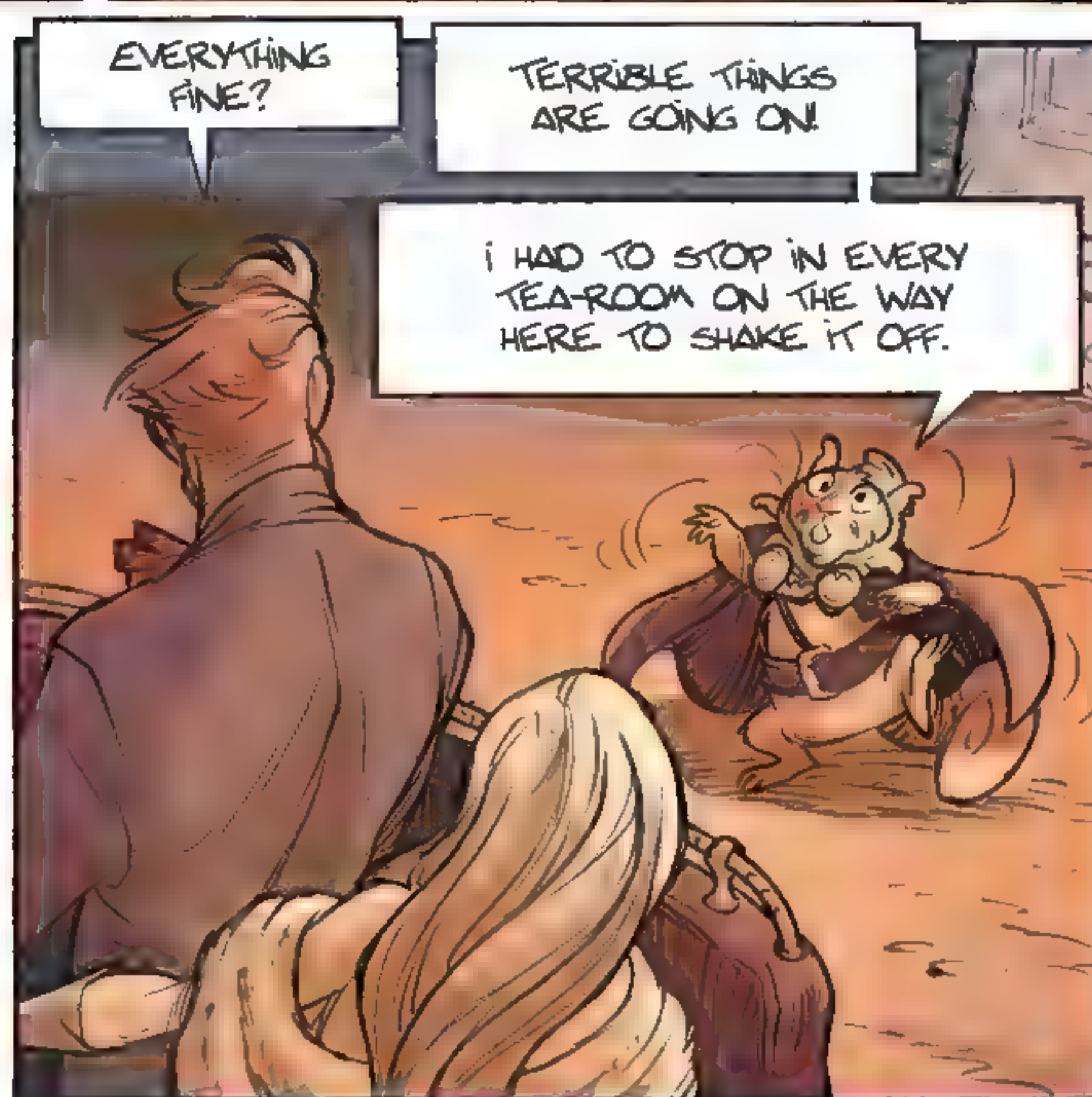
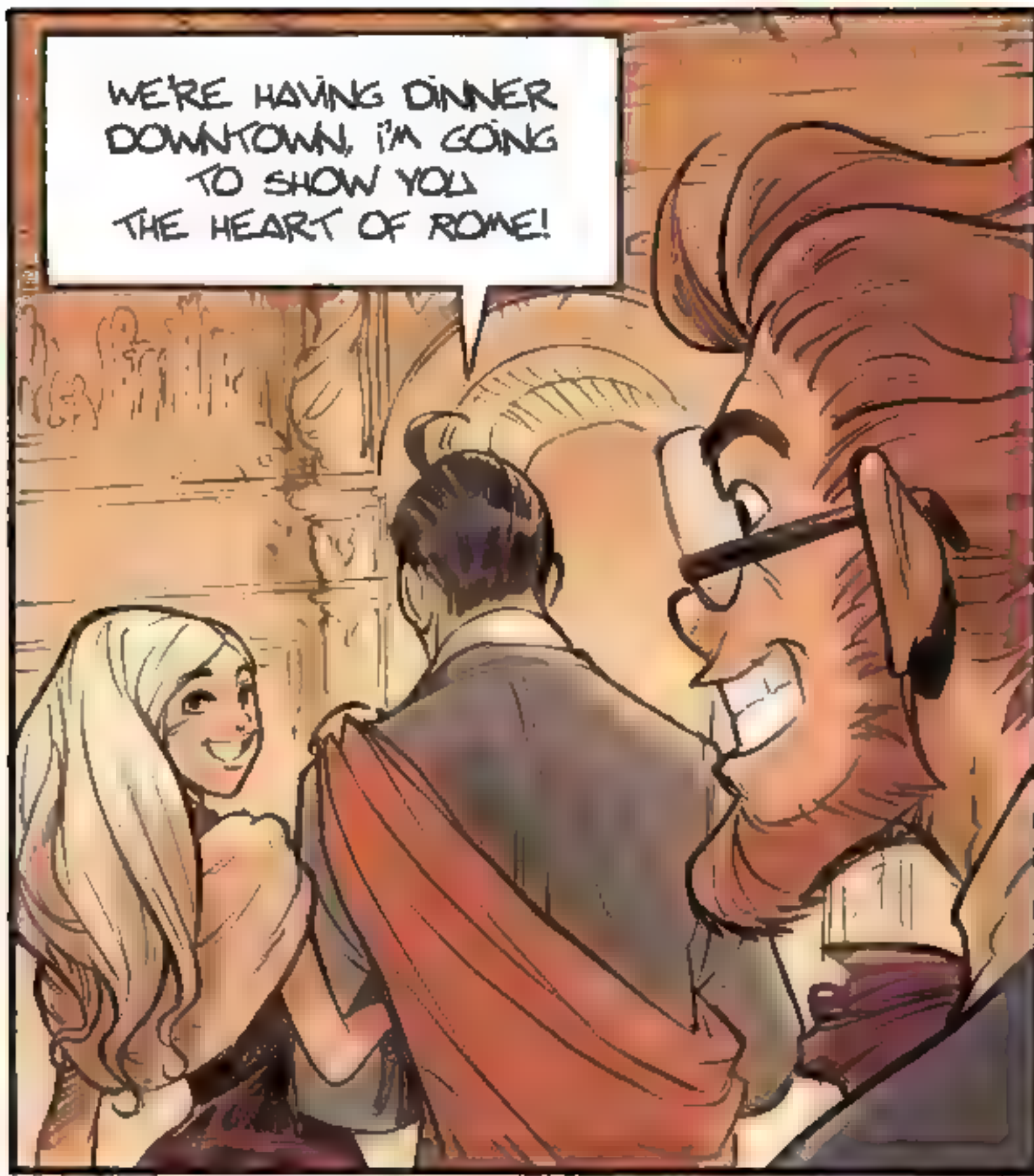
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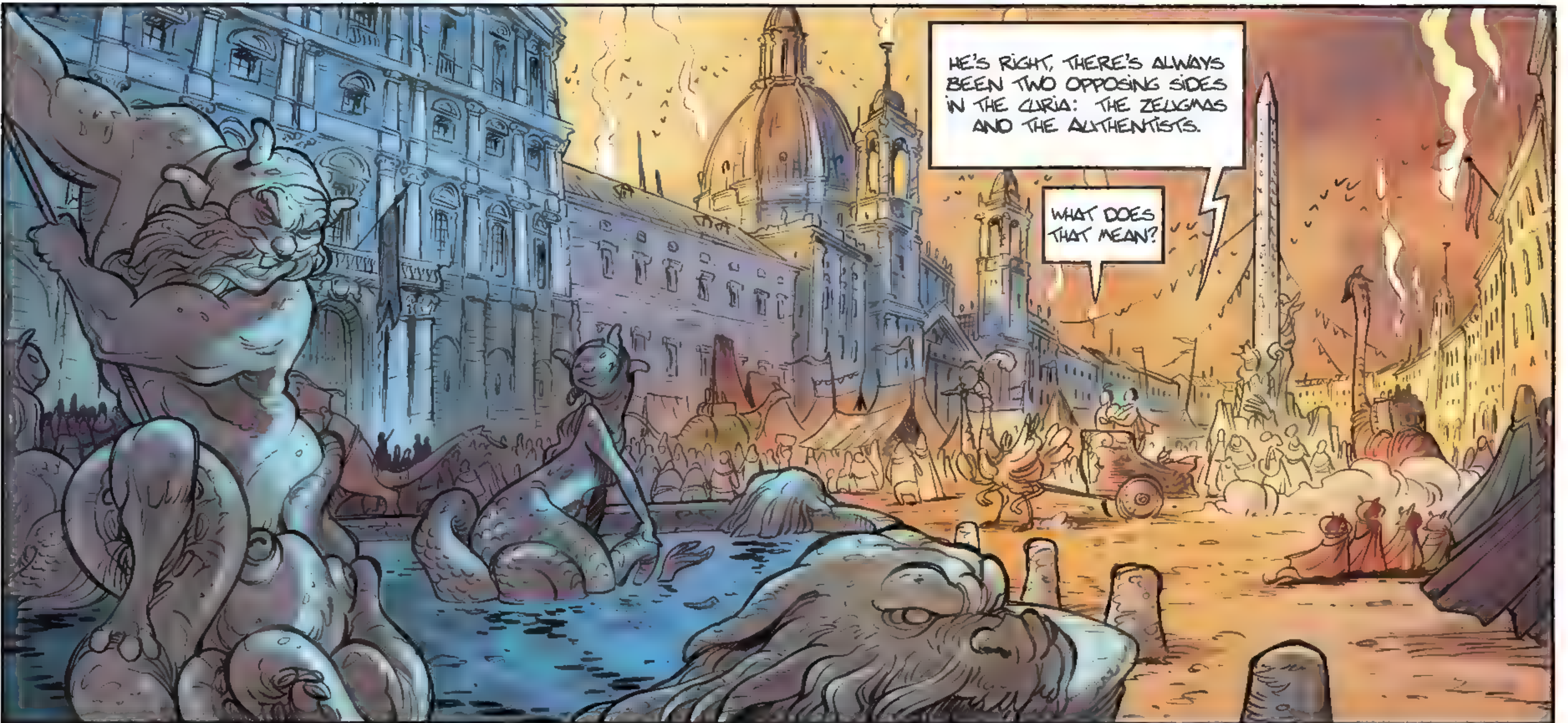
MY DEAR, YOU LOOK STUNNING!

SIMPLY GORGEOUS!

YURI, IS IT MY IMAGINATION OR ARE YOU FLIRTING WITH ME?

YOU'RE TOTALLY WORTH IT, FOURVILLE!





AND
THE AUTHENTISTS?





AND... CAN THEY DO THIS?

YOU KNOW WE ARE OF A... COMPLEX NATURE.

YES WE SAW WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU LOSE CONTROL OF YOURSELF!

GRRRR...



THE AUTHENTISTS LIKE TO GIVE FREE REIN TO THEIR IMPULSES. THEY ORGANIZE HUNTINGS...



TO THEM A REAL FRESHMAN MUST GIVE IN TO HIS INSTINCT.



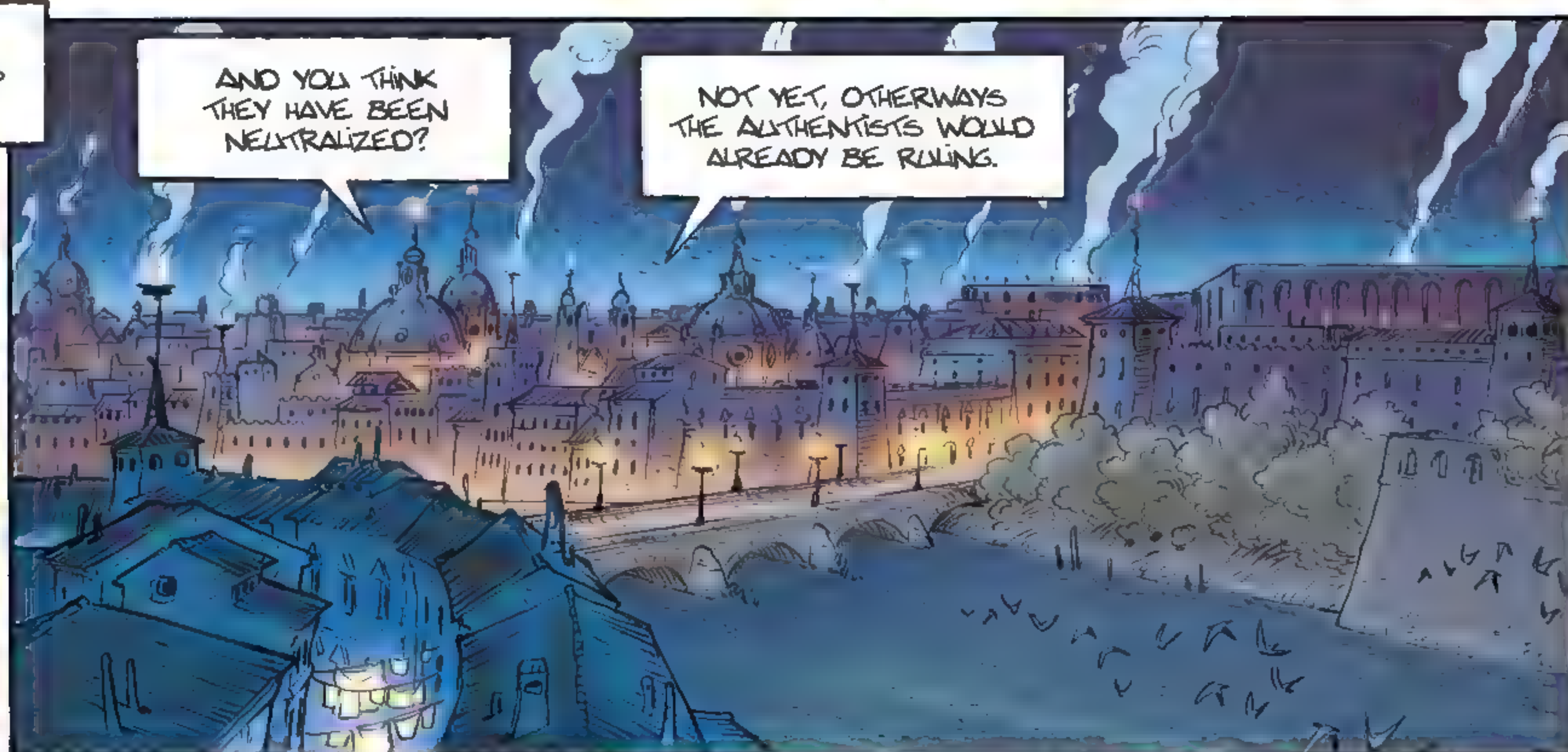
IF THEY COULD, THEY'D SPEND ALL OF THEIR TIME HUNTING PREY AND SLAUGHTERING THEM.



LUCKILY THEY ARE IN A MINORITY AT THE PONTIFICAL CURIA. HIS HOLINESS AND THE ZELGMAS ARE TOTALLY OPPOSED TO THEIR ACTIONS.

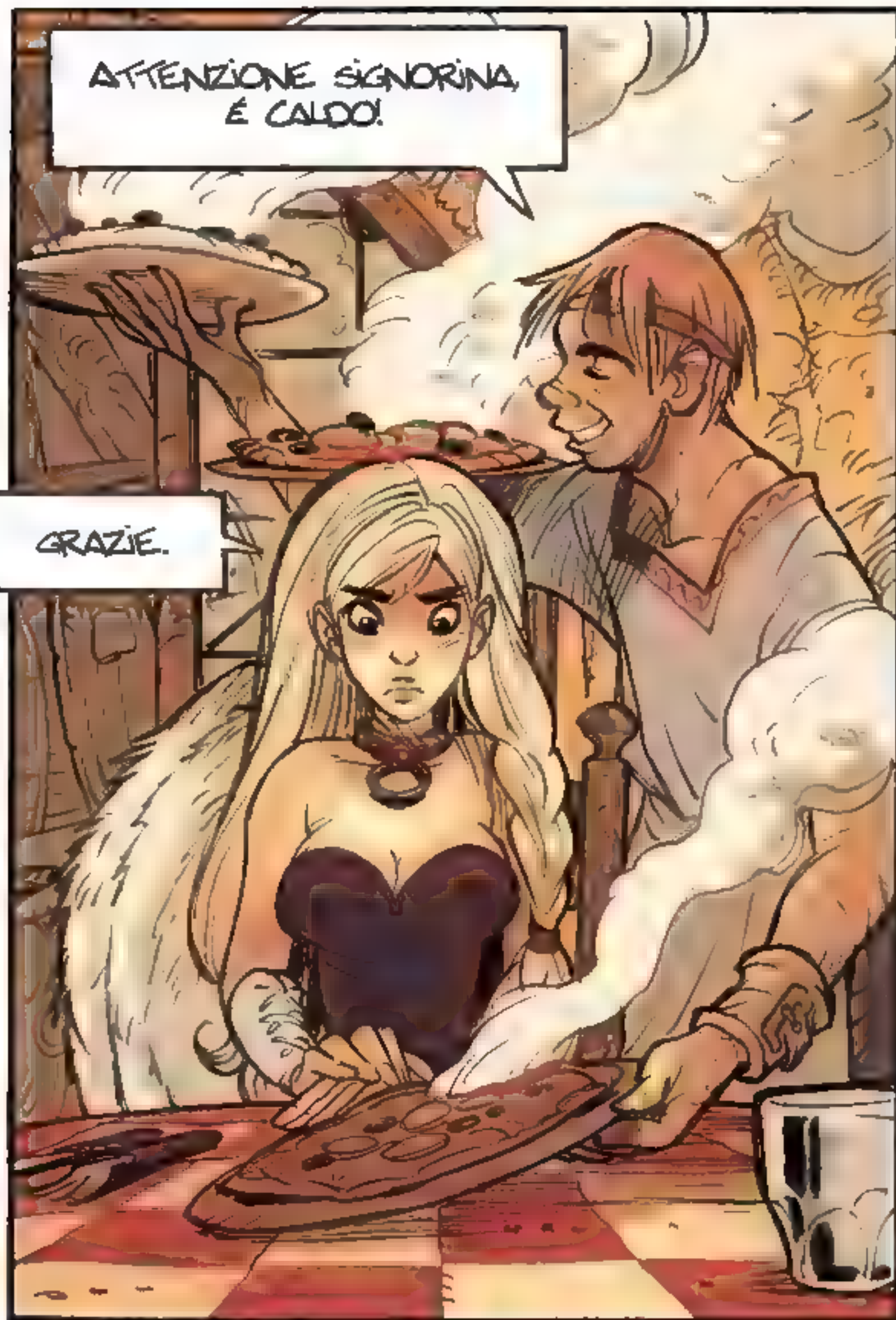


THE PROBLEM IS THAT HIS HOLINESS HAS DISAPPEARED, ALONG WITH HIS KEY MINISTERS INCLUDING MY OLD MENTOR GLONTODARGE.



AND YOU THINK THEY HAVE BEEN NEUTRALIZED?

NOT YET, OTHERWISE THE AUTHENTISTS WOULD ALREADY BE RULING.



ATTENZIONE SIGNORINA
È CALDO!

GRAZIE.



AND WHAT HAS THIS TO
DO WITH US? WHY ARE
THEY WATCHING US?

MISS GRADULE'S
THAUMIC ENERGY
IMBALANCE
WORRIES THEM.



I'M SORRY YOU GOT
INVOLVED INTO THIS,
FRAN..

DON'T WORRY.
YOU'RE SAFE
IN MY HOUSE.



EXCEPT NOW,
WE'RE OUTSIDE...

THEY WON'T DARE TO DO
ANYTHING IN THE MIDDLE
OF A CROWD. TOO MANY
WITNESSES.



APPRECIATE
THE FINESSE OF
A REAL ROMAN PIZZA!
THIS IS NOTHING LIKE
THAT STODGY THICK
CRUST THEY SERVE
YOU IN NEW YORK!



WE CAN'T STAY AROUND
ALL THESE PEOPLE
FOREVER. WE'LL HAVE
TO GO EVENTUALLY...

SO
WHAT?



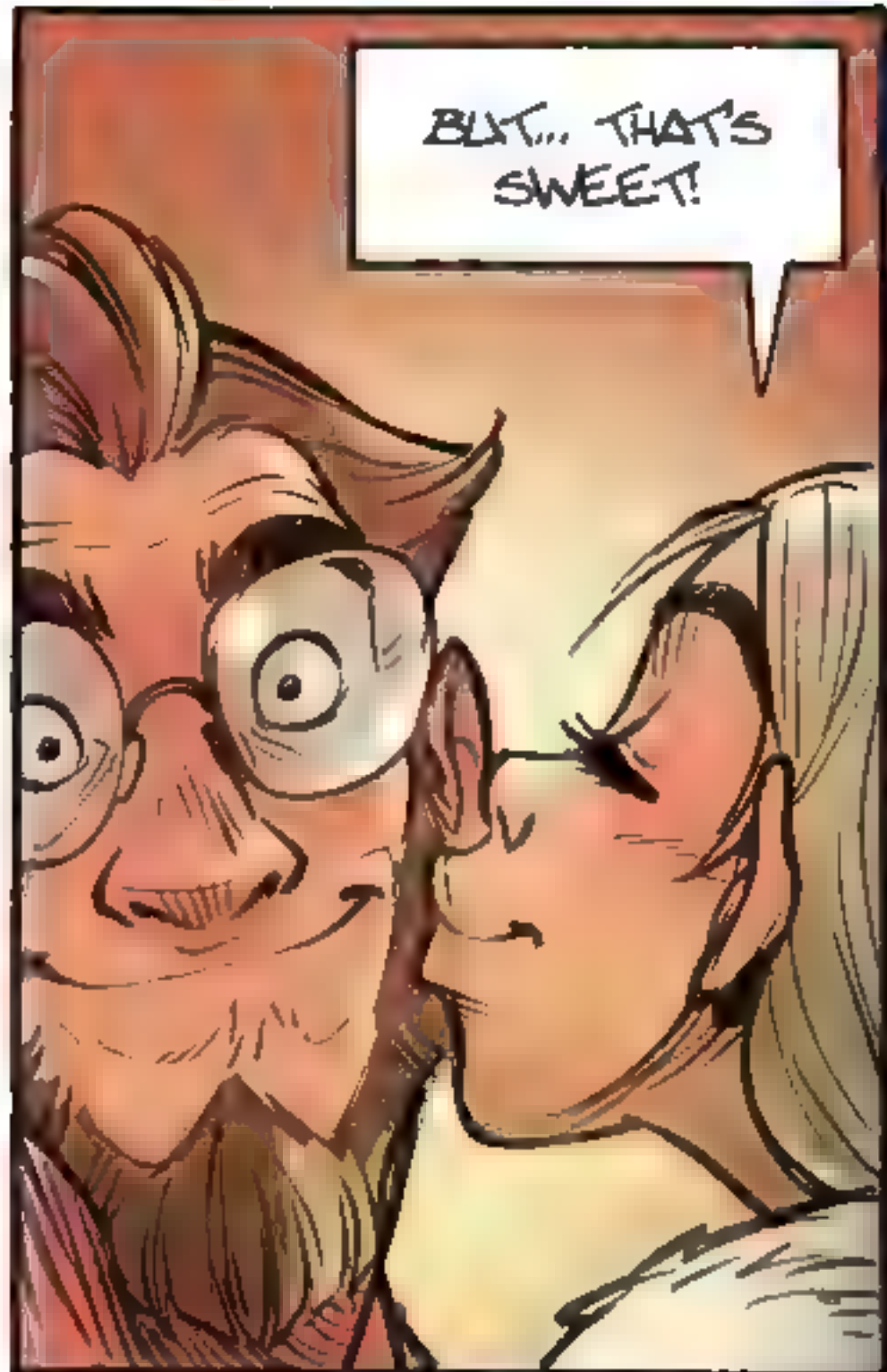
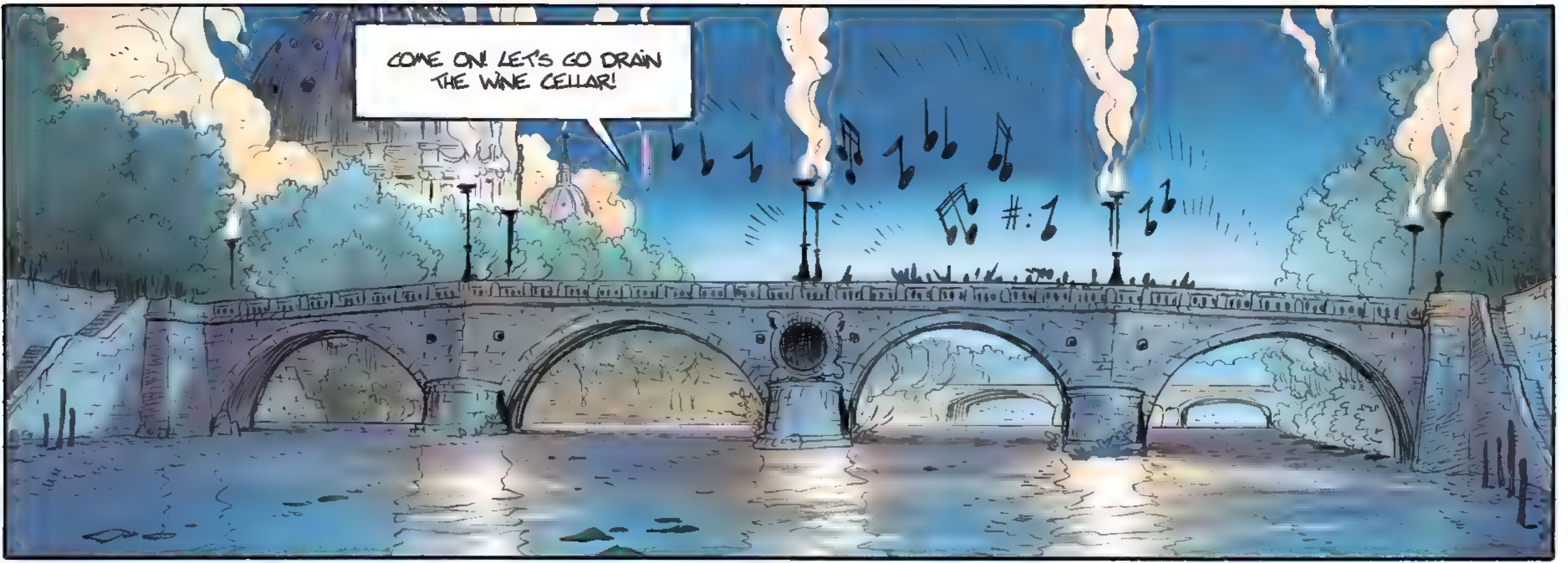
EVERYONE
WHO WANTS
TO HAVE FUN
TONIGHT CAN
FOLLOW US!

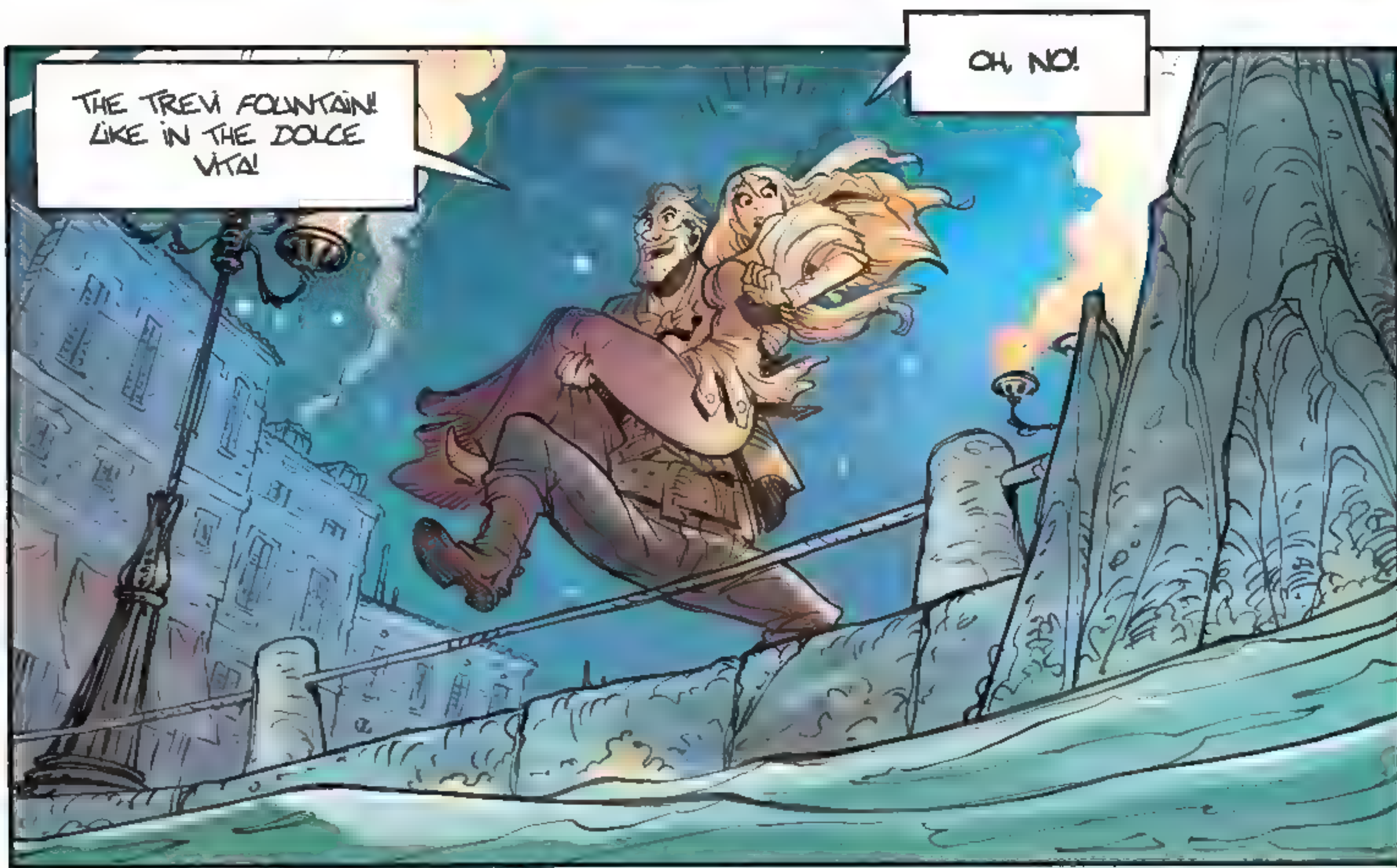


TONIGHT, BIG PARTY
AT VILLA BORGHESE!

BRAVO!

**APPLAUSO
ANDIAMO!**



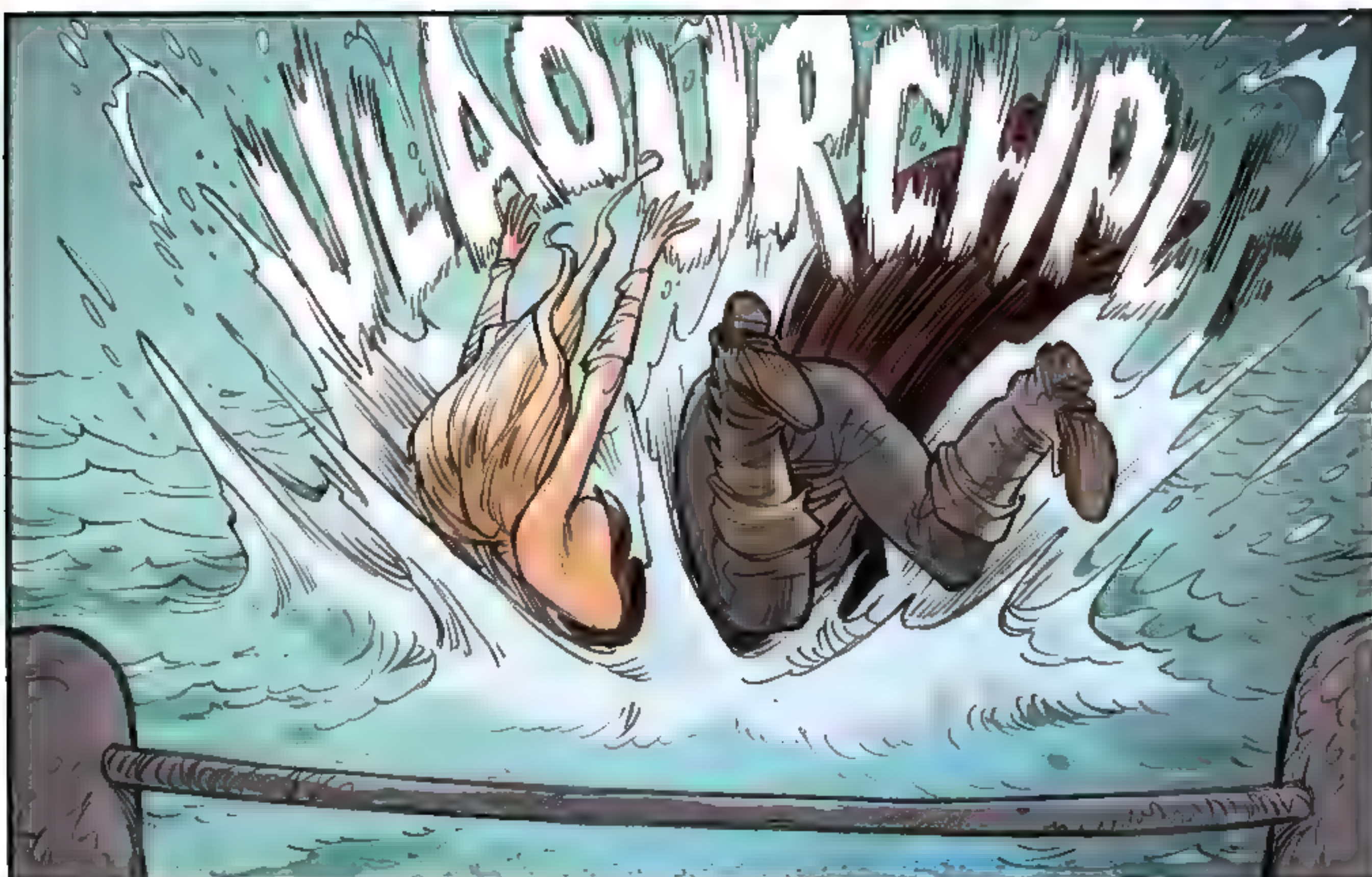


THE TREV FOUNTAIN
LIKE IN THE DOLCE
VITA!

OH NO!



SURE! YOU'RE EVEN MORE
BEAUTIFUL THAN ANITA
KIMBEEESHIT!

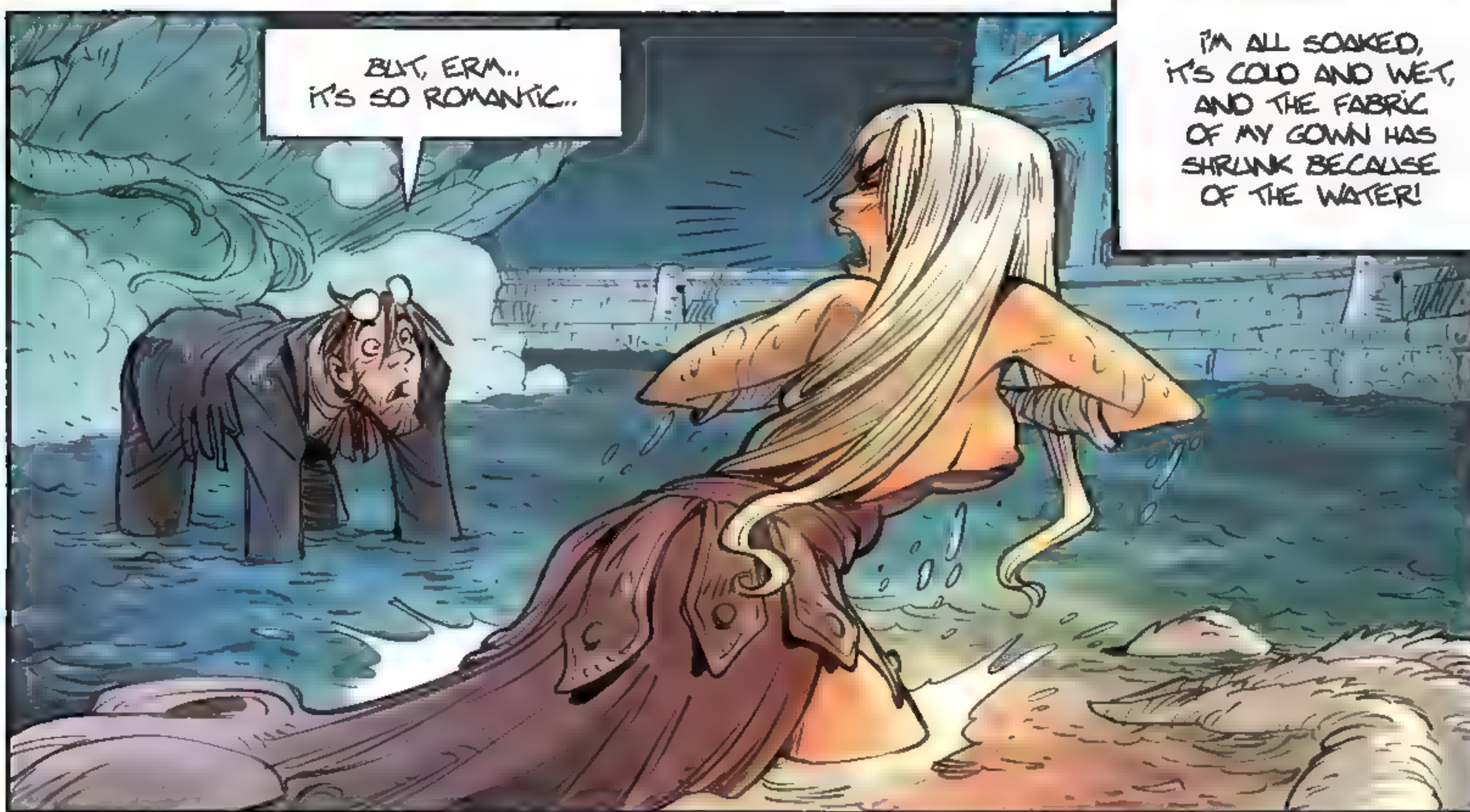


MIDNIGHT
SWIM!!

YEPEEE!!



IT SUCKS!



BUT, ERA...
IT'S SO ROMANTIC...

I'M ALL SOAKED,
IT'S COLD AND WET,
AND THE FABRIC
OF MY GOWN HAS
SHRUNK BECAUSE
OF THE WATER!



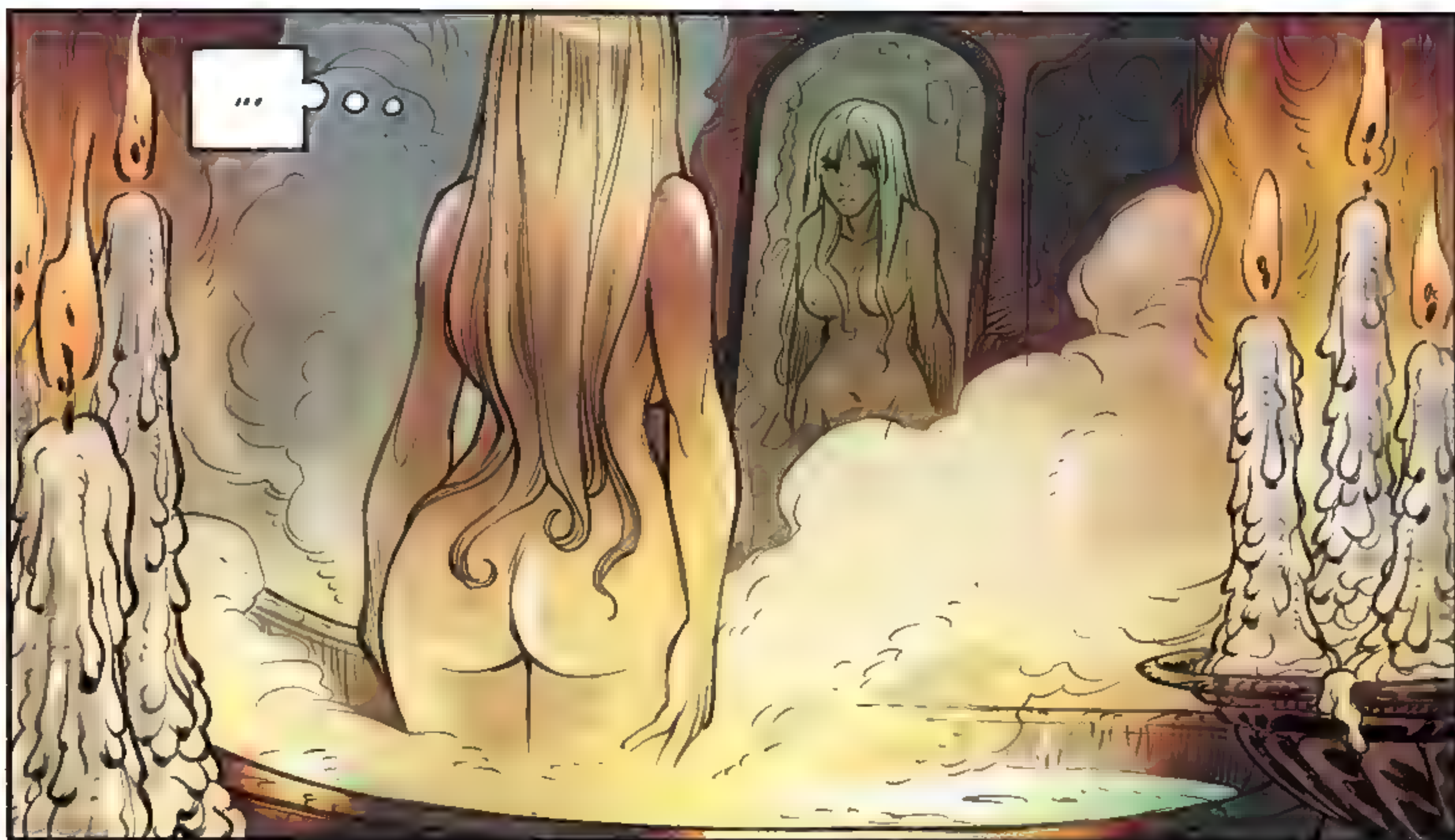
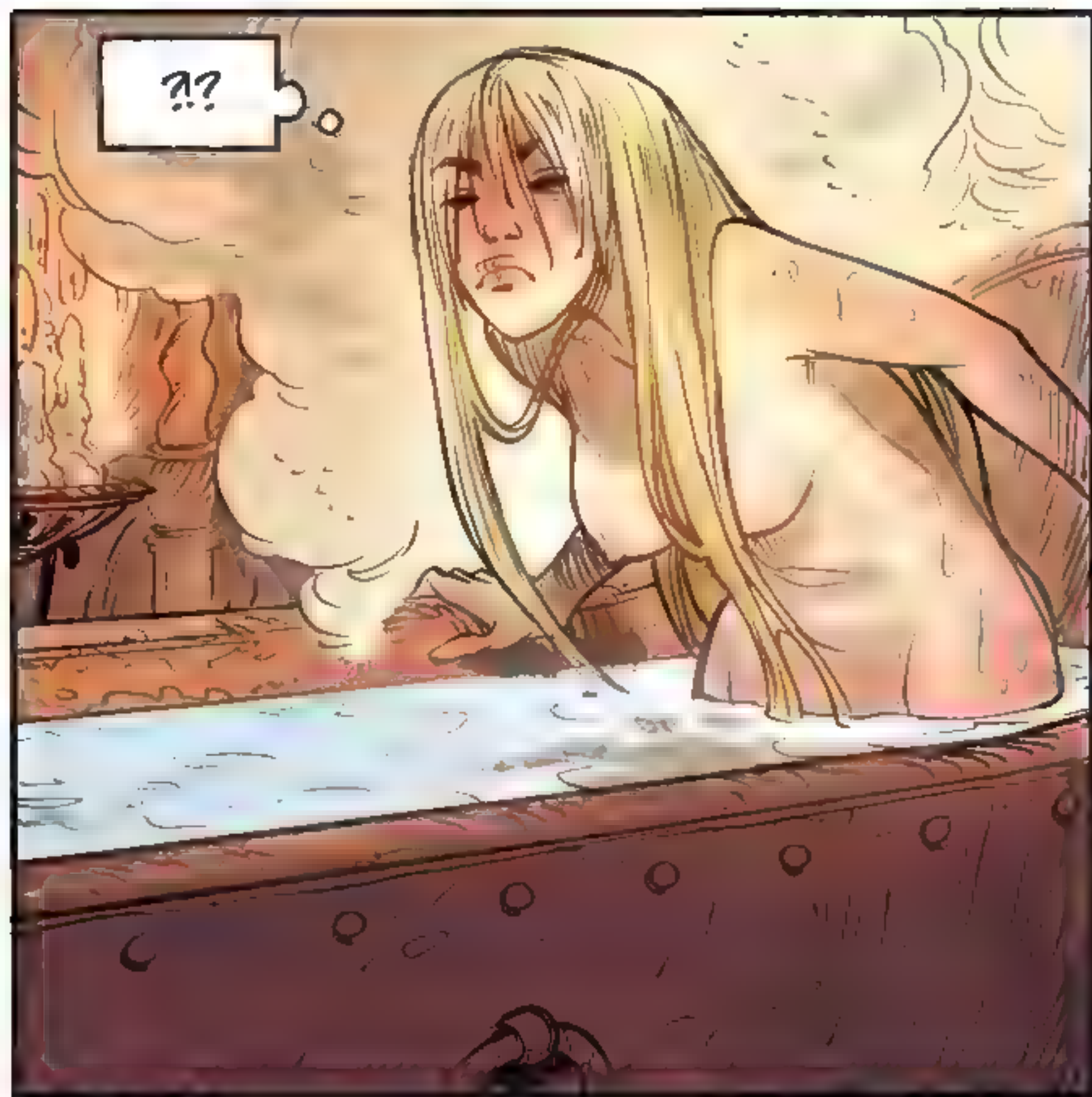
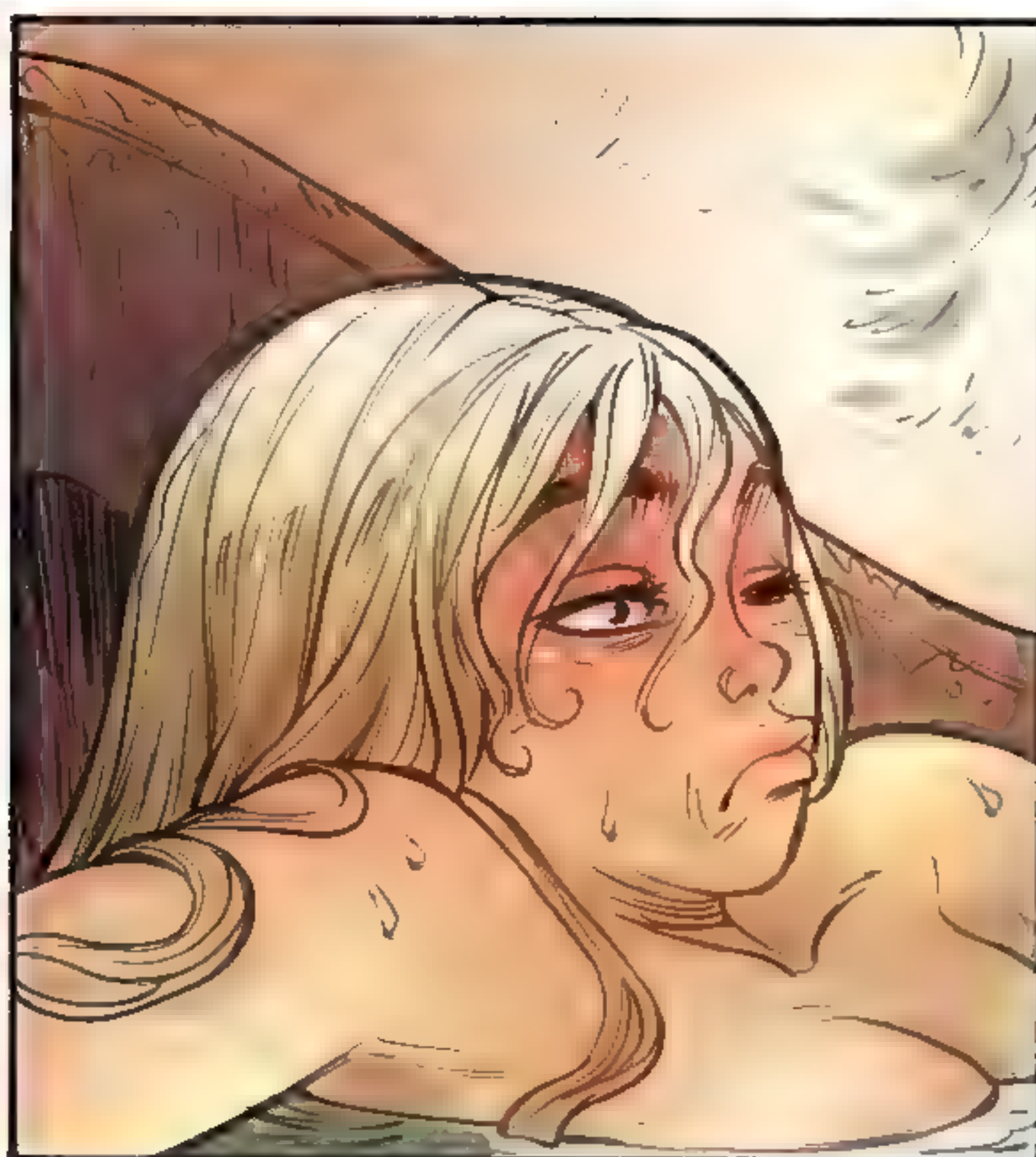
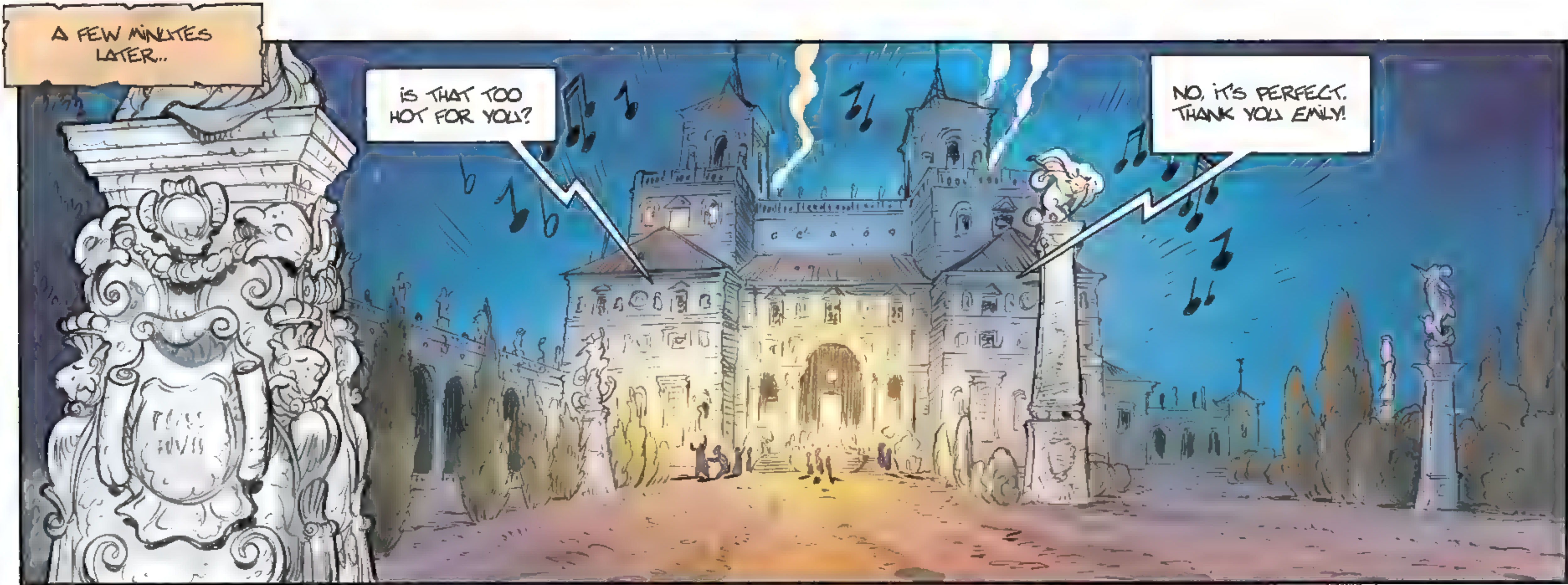
KEEP WARM,
MY DEAR

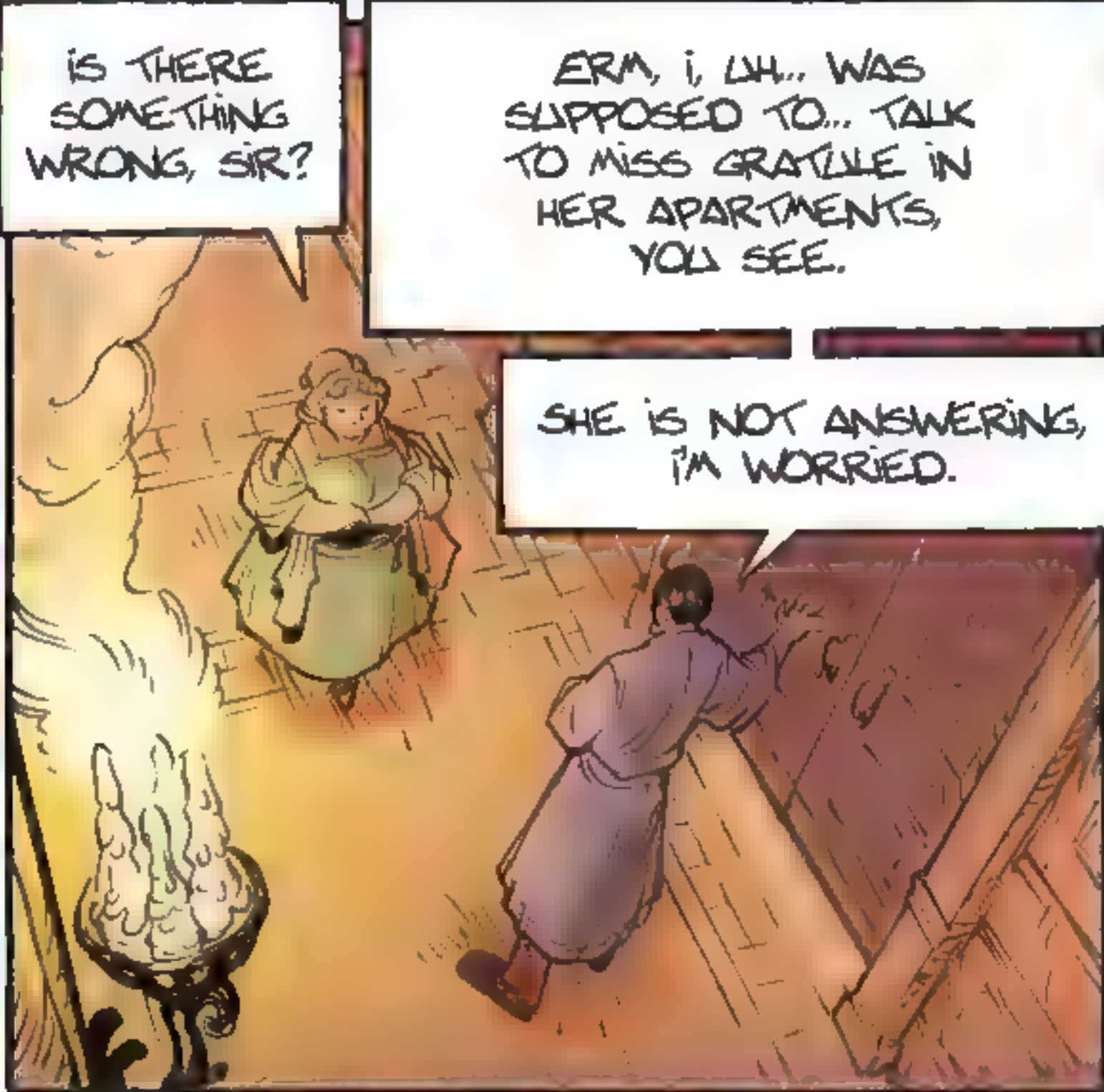
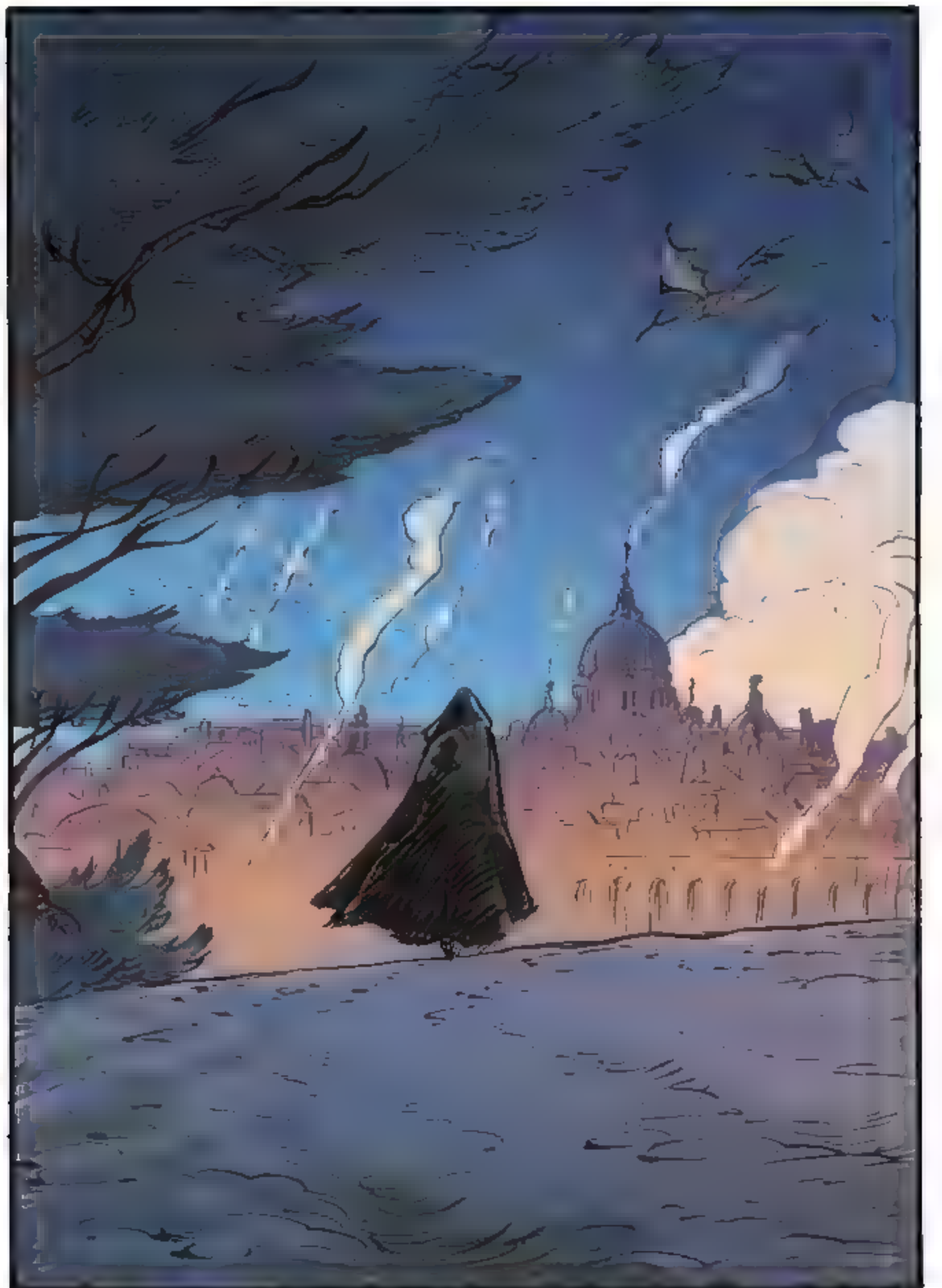
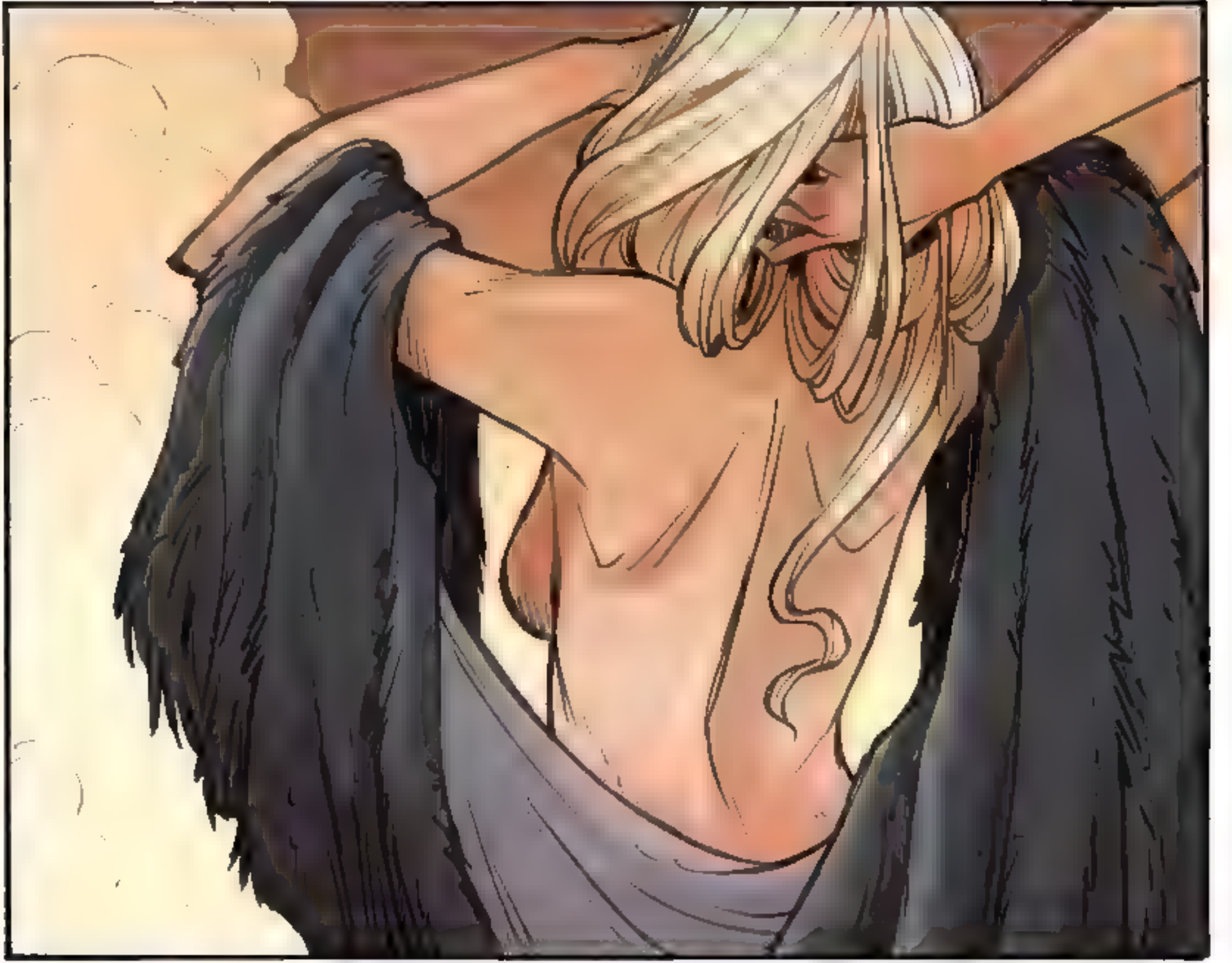
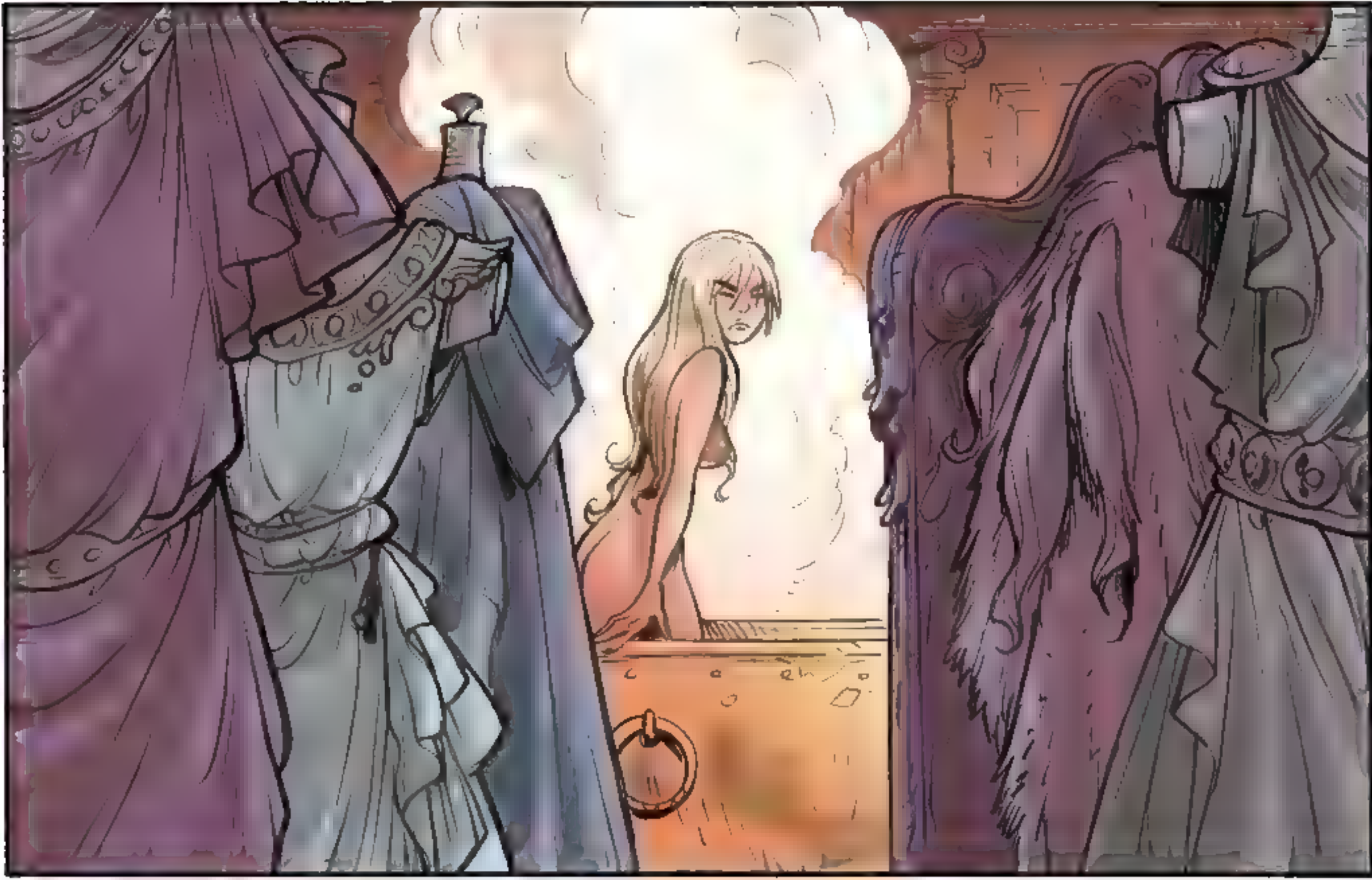
THANKS.

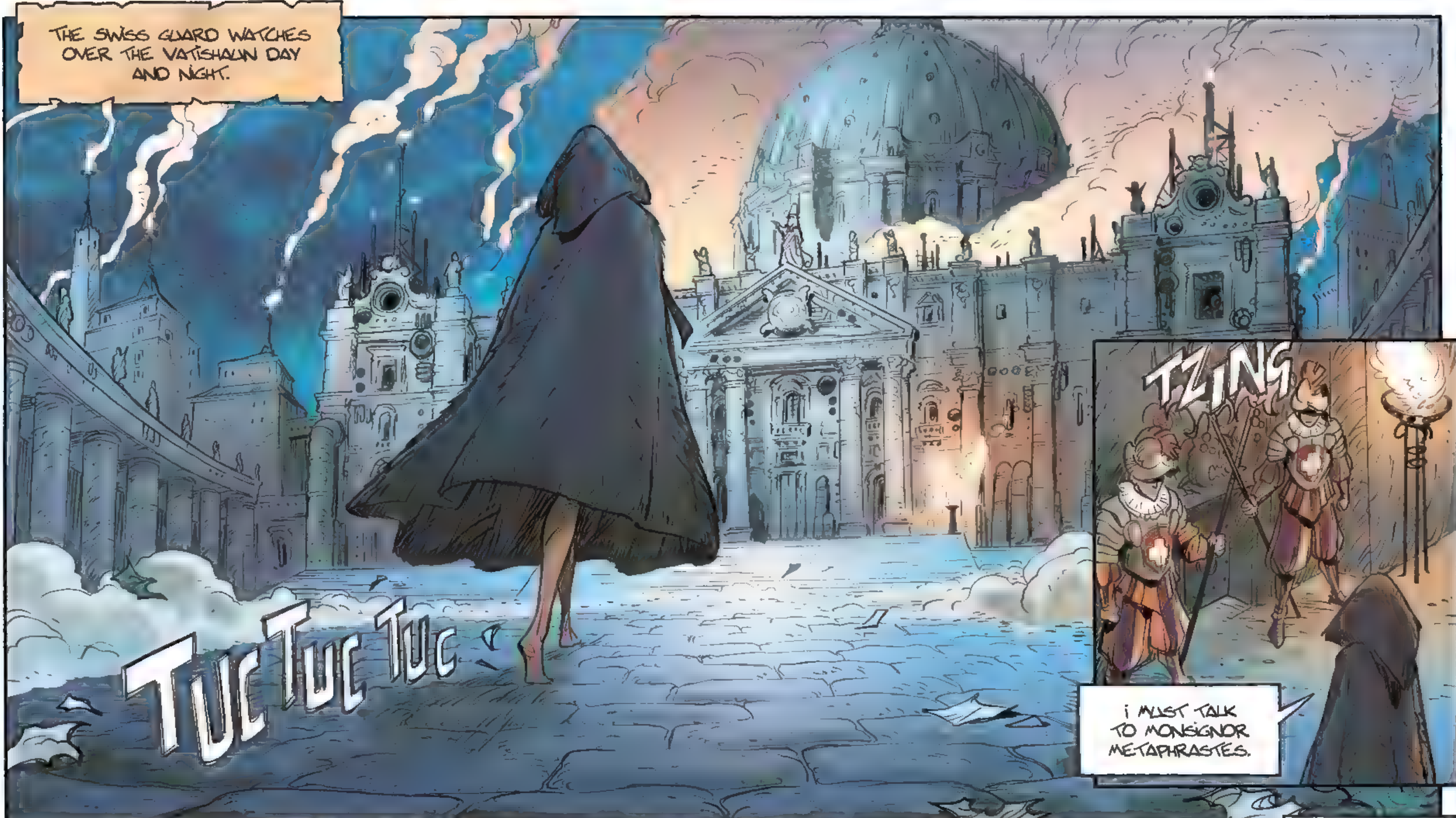


I THOUGHT I WAS
DOING THE RIGHT
THING...

I'VE BEEN OBSERVING HUMANS FOR
A LONG TIME AND I'VE NEVER FOUND
THAT THROWING A YOUNG WOMAN INTO
COLD WATER COULD HELP SEDUCE HER



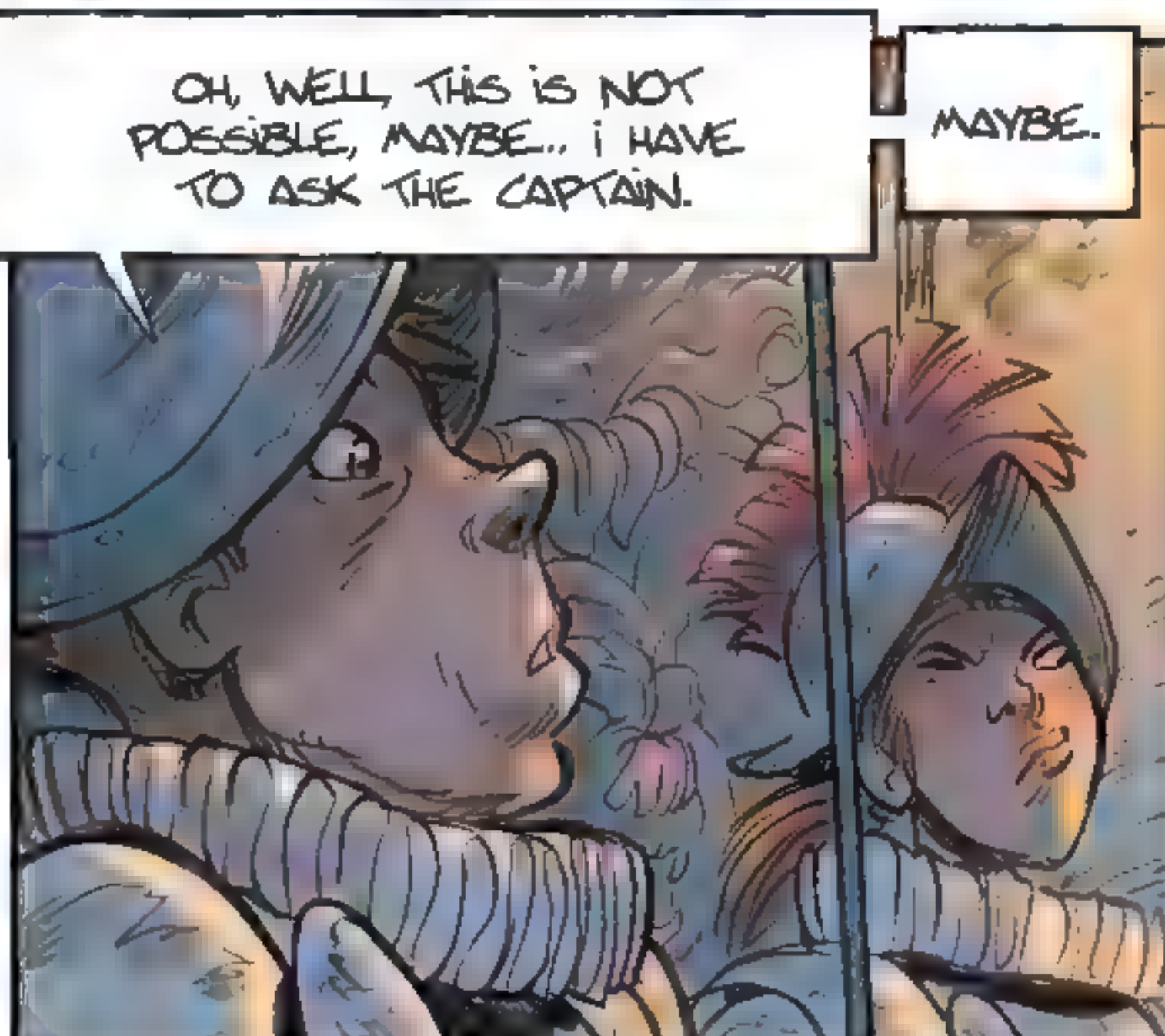




THE SWISS GUARD WATCHES OVER THE VATICAN DAY AND NIGHT.



I MUST TALK TO MONSIGNOR METAPHRASTES.



OH, WELL, THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE, MAYBE... I HAVE TO ASK THE CAPTAIN.

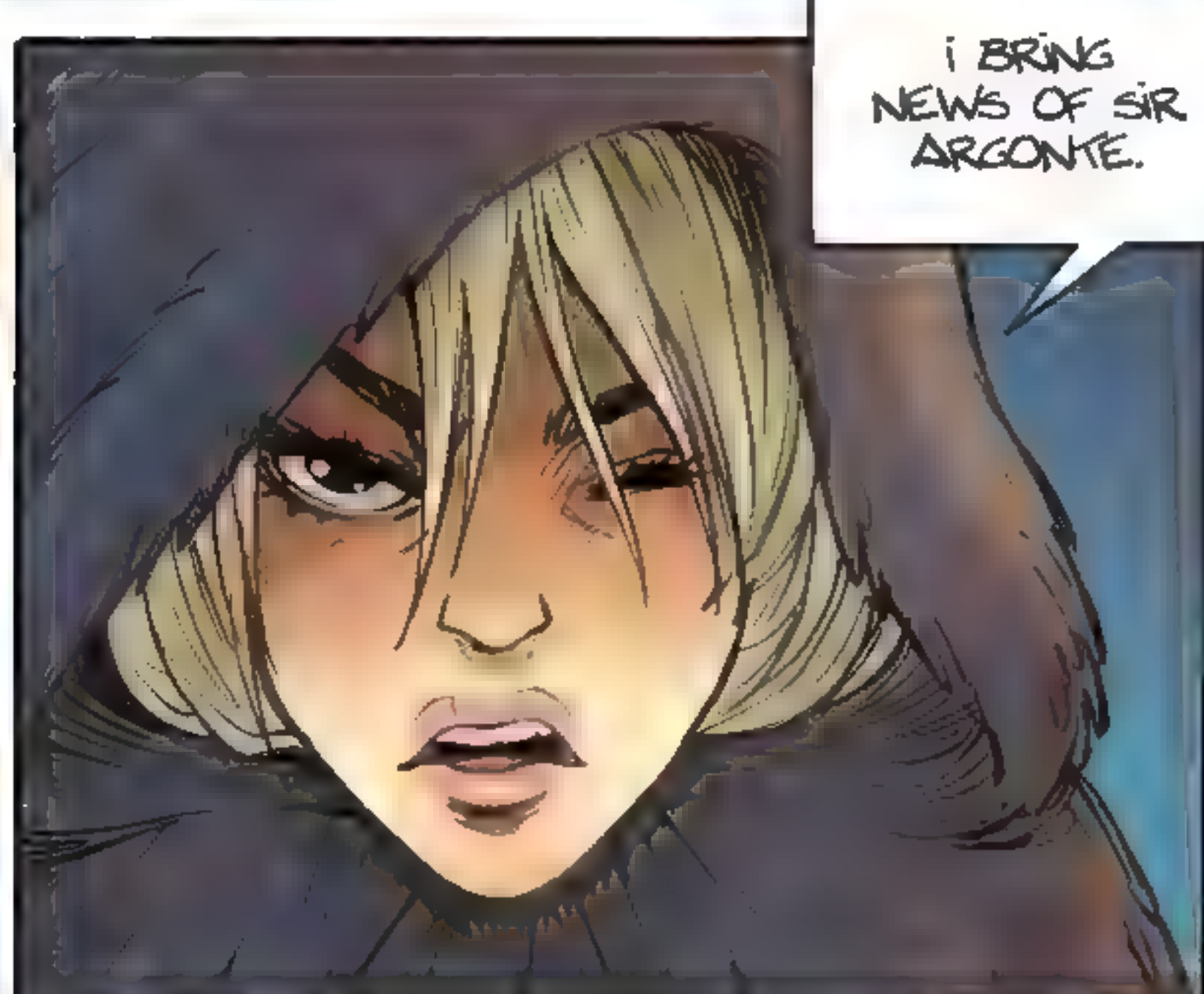
MAYBE.



THEN ASK.

HE'S NOT GOING TO APPRECIATE BEING DISTURBED, TODAY IT'S THE CLOCK DAY, AND WE'RE HAVING A CHOCOLATE-FONDUE PARTY.

MAYBE.



I BRING NEWS OF SIR ARGONTE.



A GIRL WHO WANTS TO MEET SIR METAPHRASTES? AT THIS TIME OF THE NIGHT?

WELL YES, THAT'S RIGHT, MAYBE.

THEY'D TRY ANYTHING! WELL, THE UNIFORM DRIVES THEM CRAZY...



ALL RIGHT, SEND HER IN.



NOW MISS, THAT'S IS REALLY A RIDICULOUS FANTASY!

DO YOU THINK YOU'RE THE FIRST ONE TO TRY?

ANYWAY, I BET...



I KNEW IT! NAKED IN A FUR COAT, IN A GUARDHOUSE!

MY POOR GIRL, THIS IS SUCH A CLICHE...



TELL METAPHRASTES THAT ARGONTE IS HERE, OR YOU CAN PACK AND GO BACK TO YOUR ALPINE PASTURES.

BUT... I... KNOW MASTER ARGONTE AND...



HE'S ABOUT THIS TALL AND HE DOESN'T LOOK LIKE... WELL... EXCEPT THE EYES MAYBE... WELL, YES...

ALRIGHT...

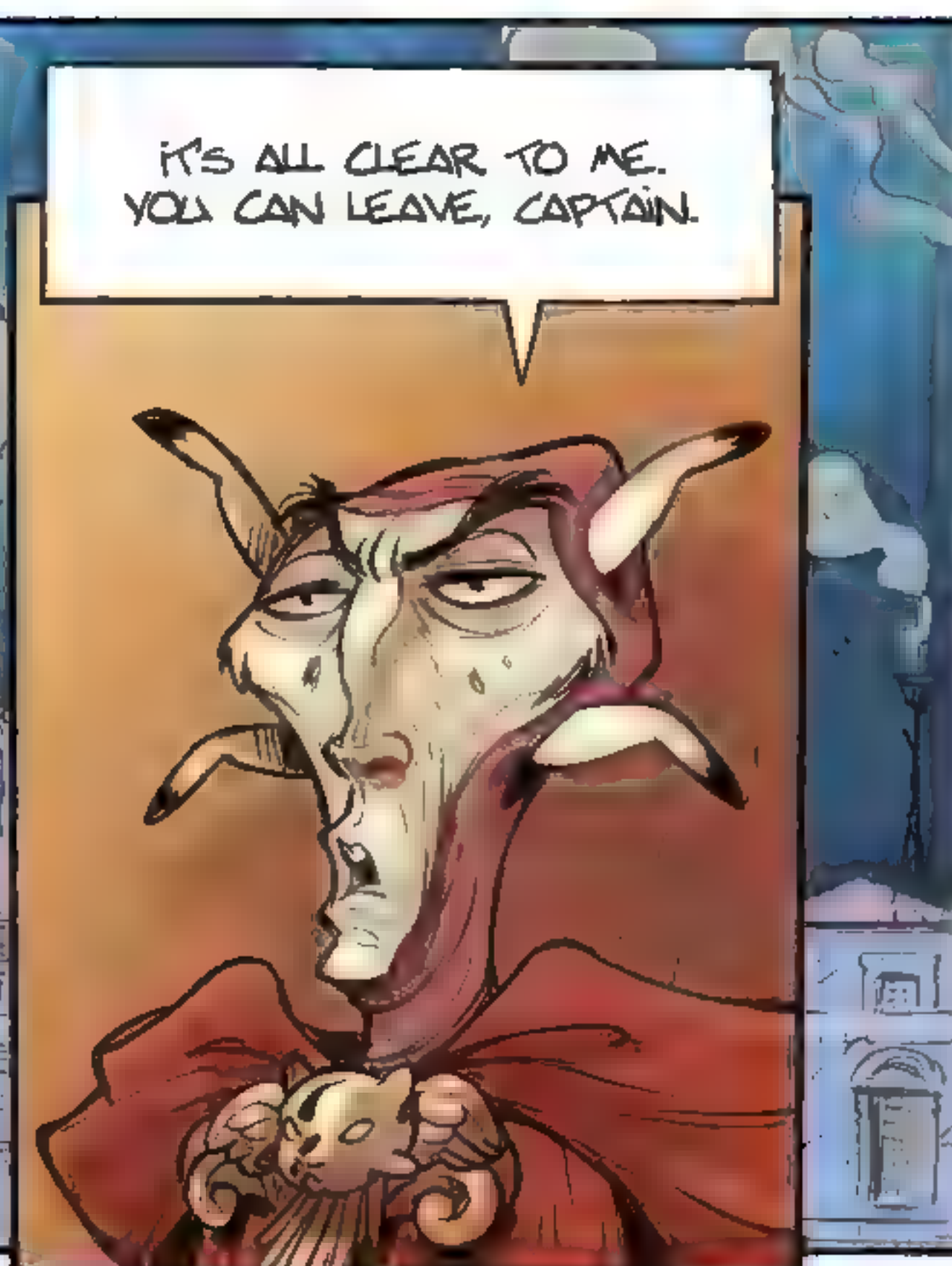
I'LL GO.

IMMEDIATELY.

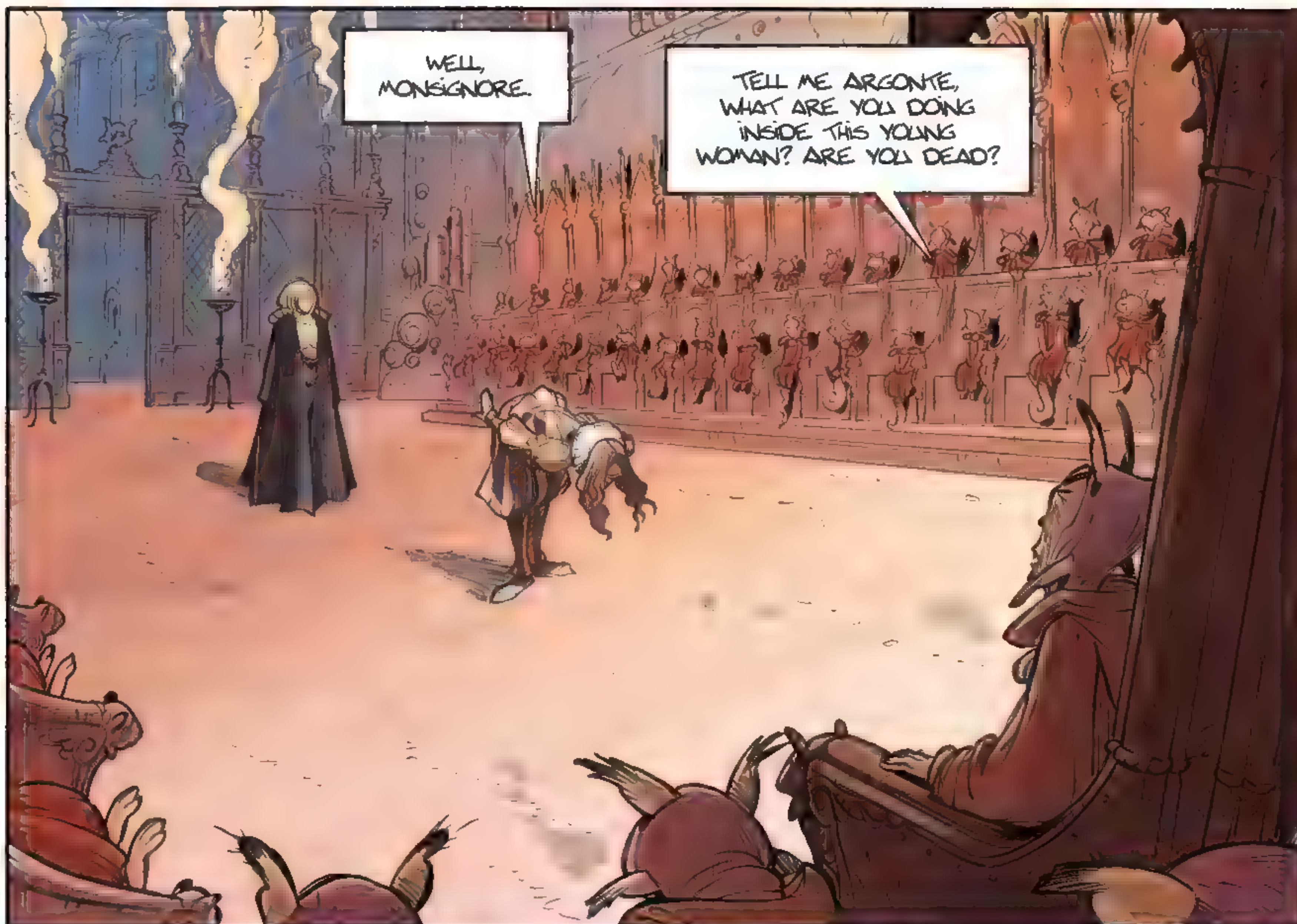


WHAT, CAPTAIN? SIR ARGONTE IS HERE AND YOU MAKE HIM WAIT?

WELL, YOUR EXCELLENCY, THE SITUATION IS A BIT CONFUSING...

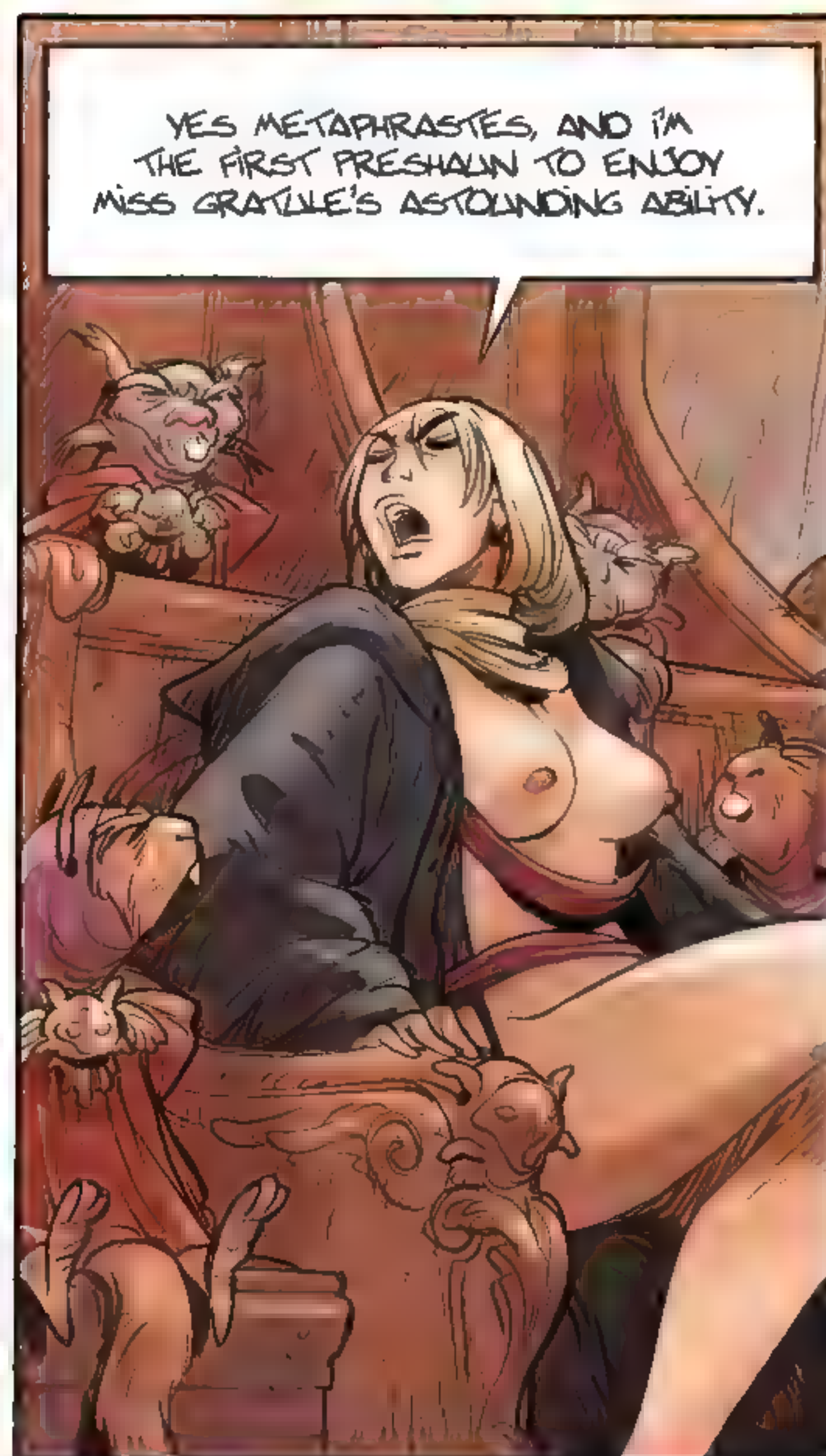


IT'S ALL CLEAR TO ME. YOU CAN LEAVE, CAPTAIN.

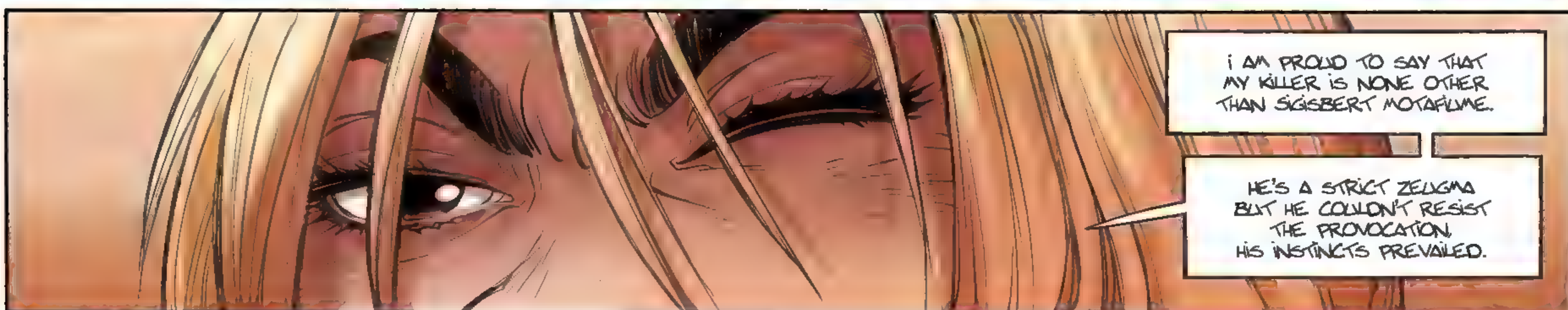


WELL, MONSIEUR.

TELL ME ARGONTE, WHAT ARE YOU DOING INSIDE THIS YOUNG WOMAN? ARE YOU DEAD?



YES METAPHRASTES, AND I'M THE FIRST PRESALIN TO ENJOY MISS GRATULE'S ASTOUNDING ABILITY.

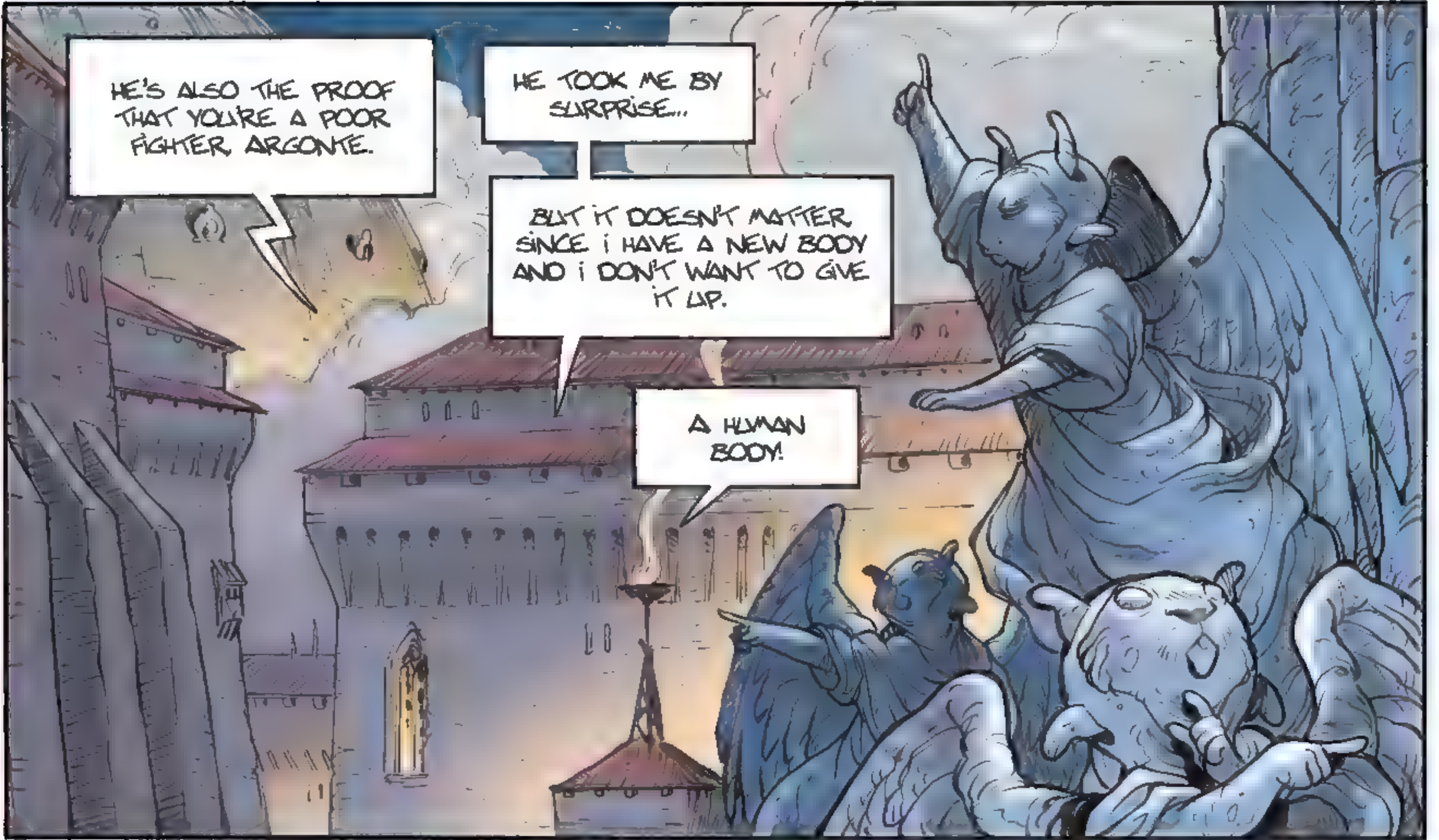


I AM PROUD TO SAY THAT MY KILLER IS NONE OTHER THAN SIGSBERT NOTAFUME.

HE'S A STRICT ZELGMA BUT HE COULDN'T RESIST THE PROVOCATION. HIS INSTINCTS PREVAILED.



HE'S THE LIVING PROOF THAT NO FRESHAWN CAN IGNORE THE CALL OF HIS WILD AND VIOLENT NATURE!



HE'S ALSO THE PROOF THAT YOU'RE A POOR FIGHTER ARGONTE.

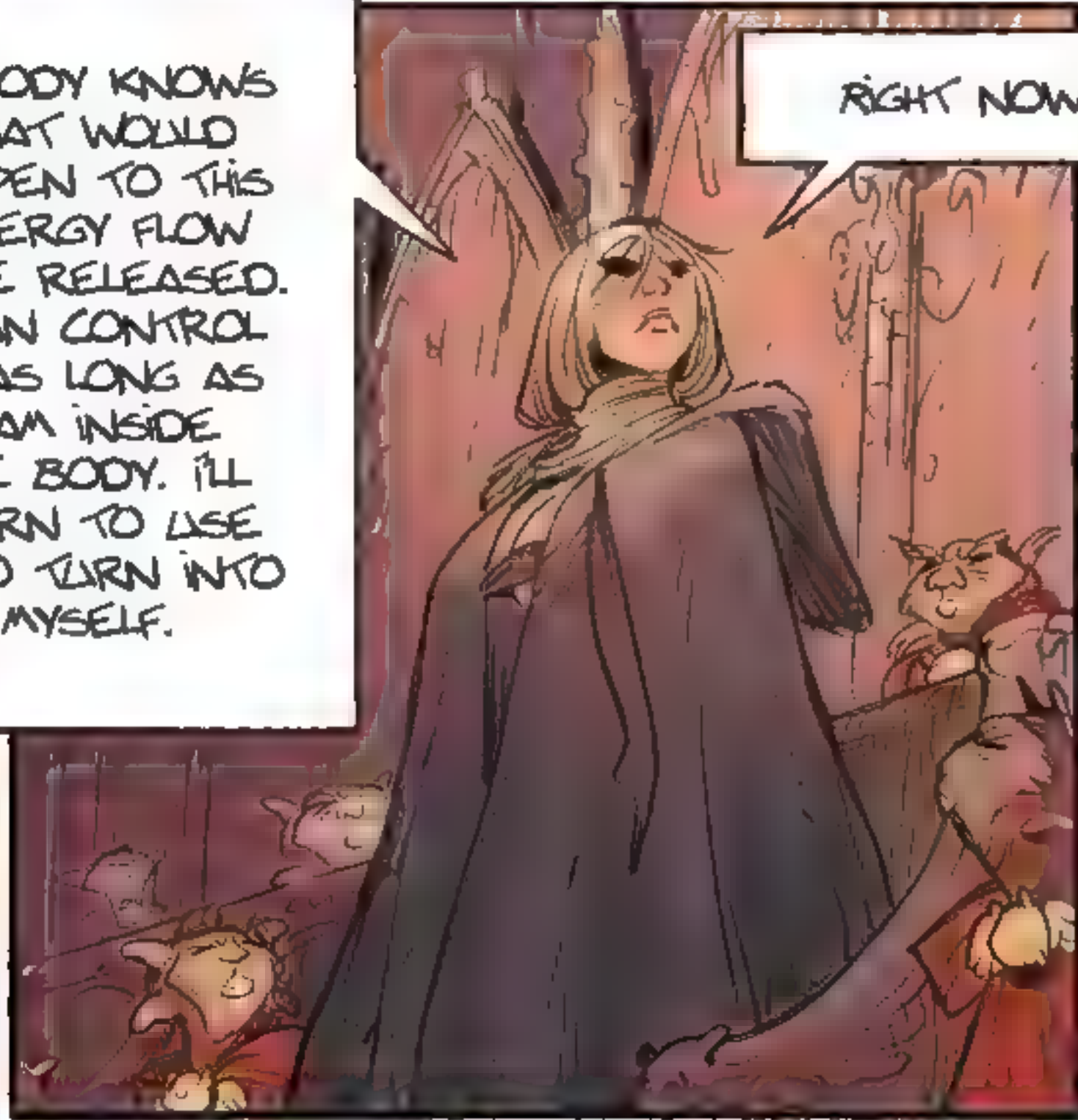
HE TOOK ME BY SURPRISE...

BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER SINCE I HAVE A NEW BODY AND I DON'T WANT TO GIVE IT UP.

A HUMAN BODY!

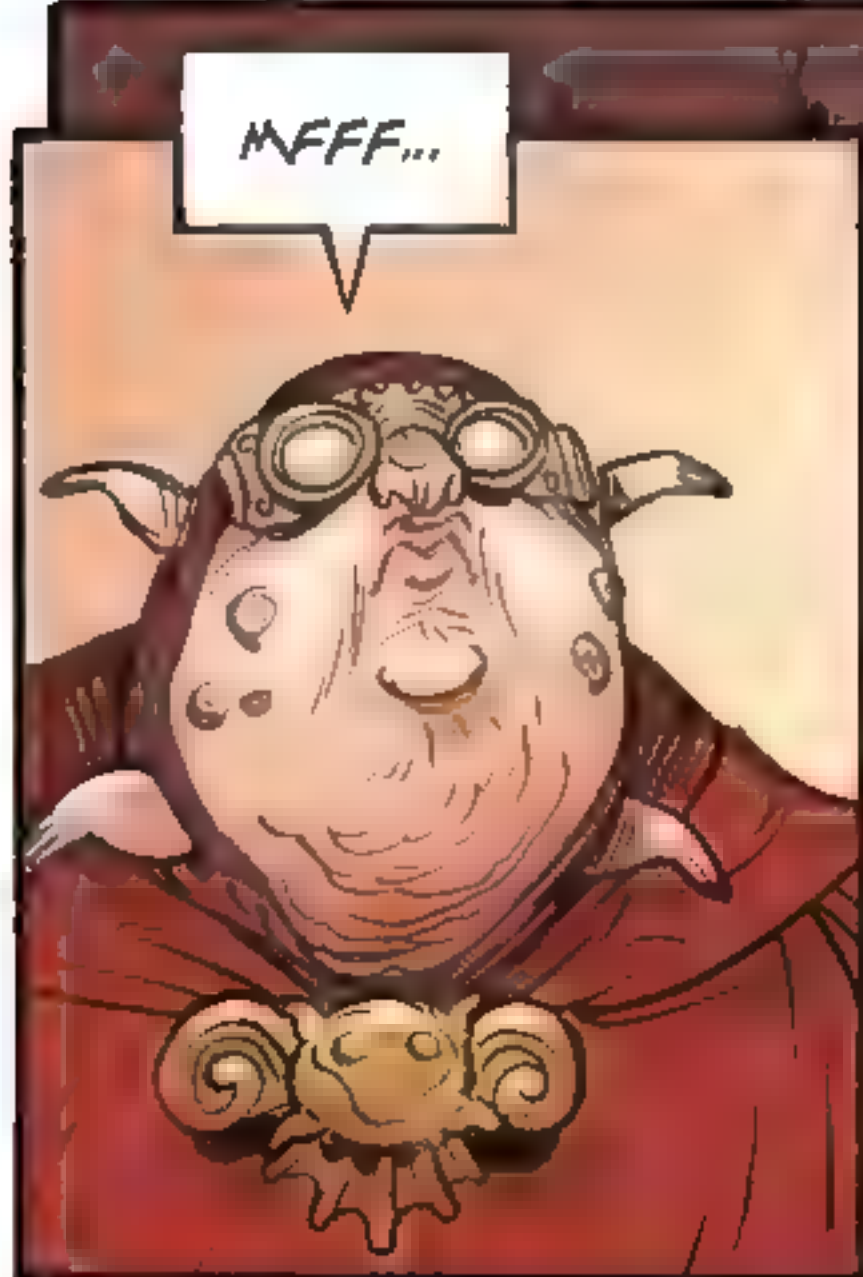


THIS BODY IS UPSETTING THE THALVIC EQUILIBRIUM. IT MUST BE ELIMINATED, YOU HAVE TO SACRIFICE YOURSELF, ARGONTE.

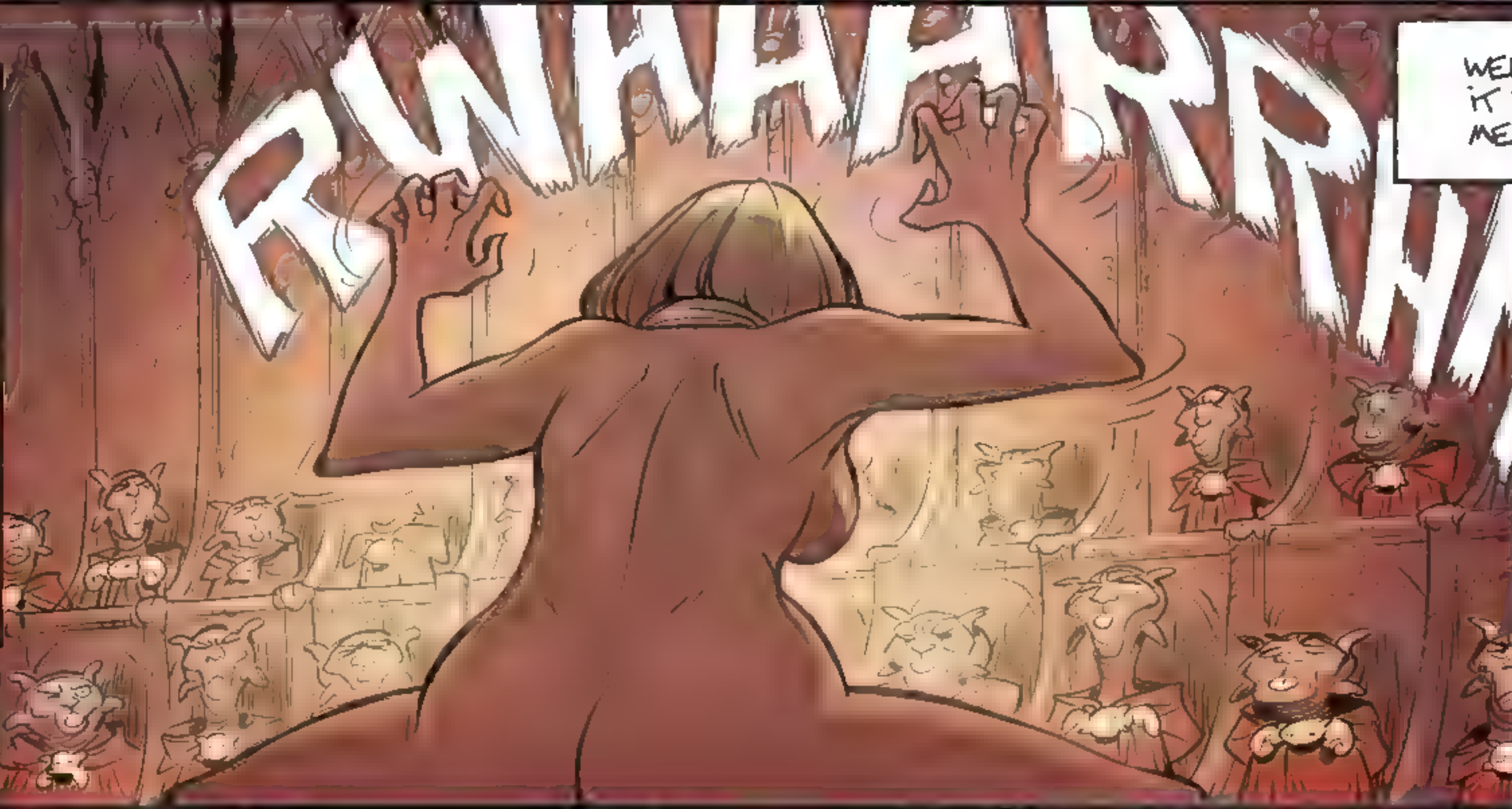


NOBODY KNOWS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THIS ENERGY FLOW ONCE RELEASED. I CAN CONTROL IT, AS LONG AS I AM INSIDE THE BODY. I'LL LEARN TO USE IT TO TURN INTO MYSELF.

RIGHT NOW.

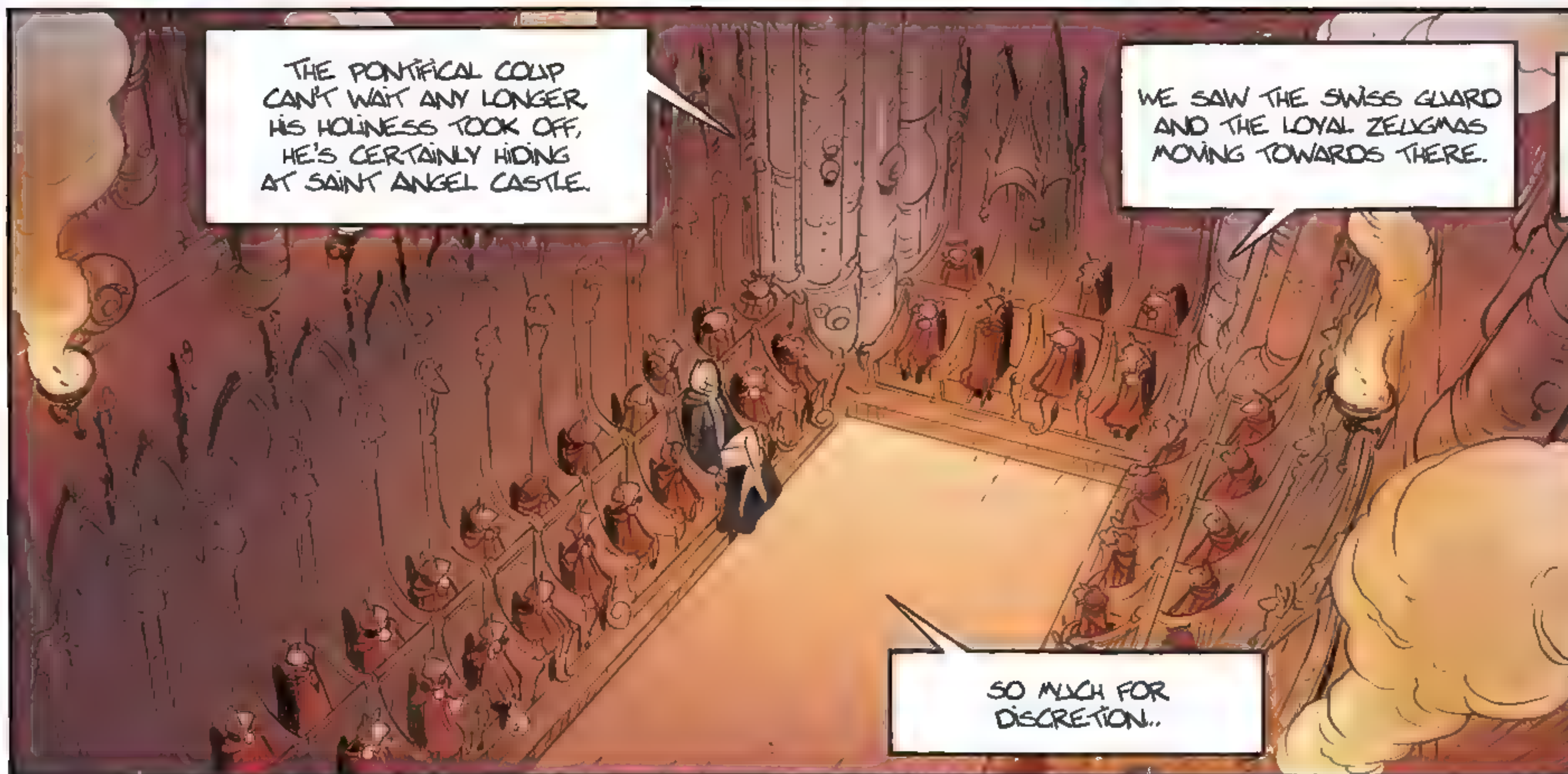


MFFF...



WELL, SURELY IT WILL TAKE ME A WHILE...

WHERE ARE WE WITH OUR PROJECTS?



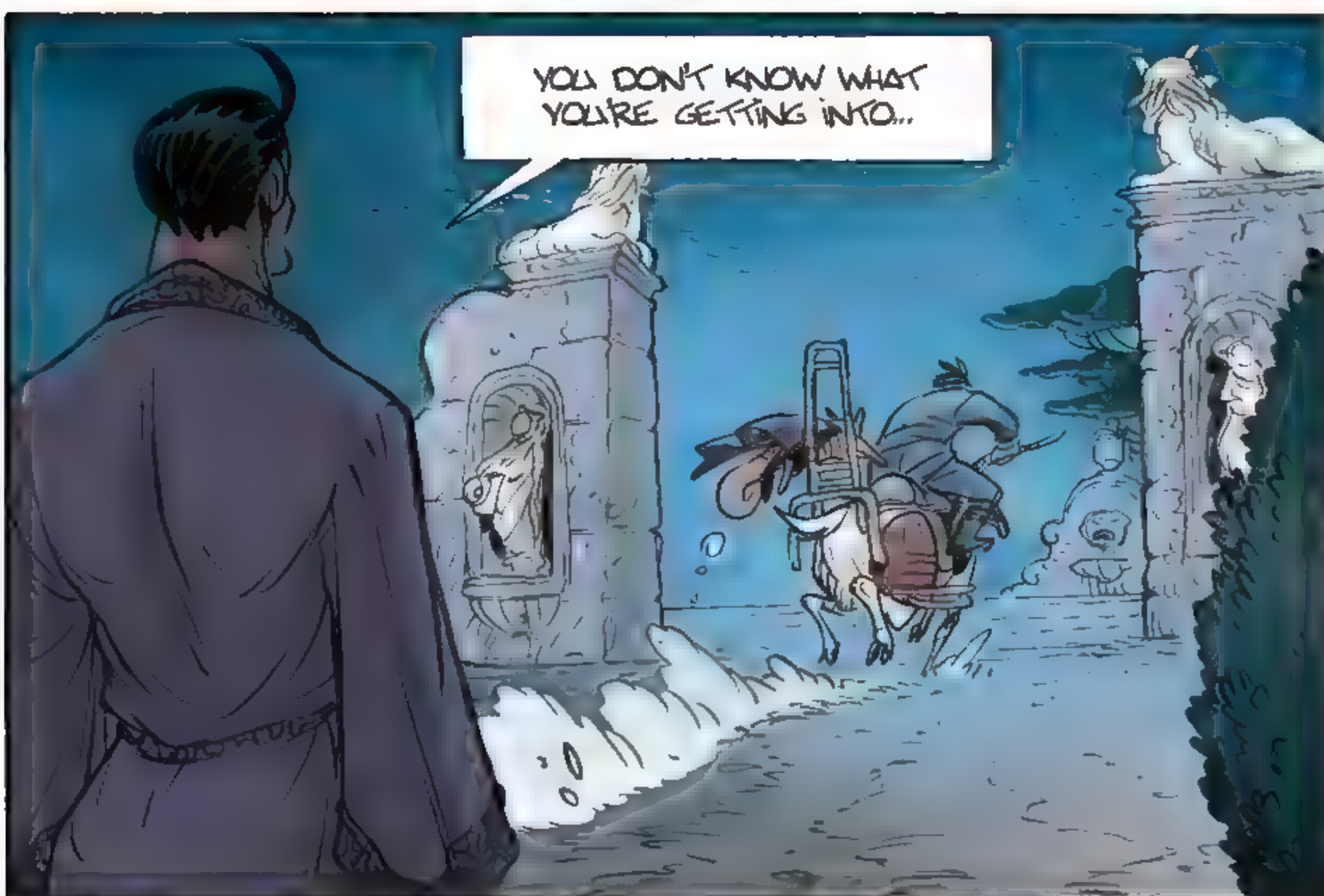
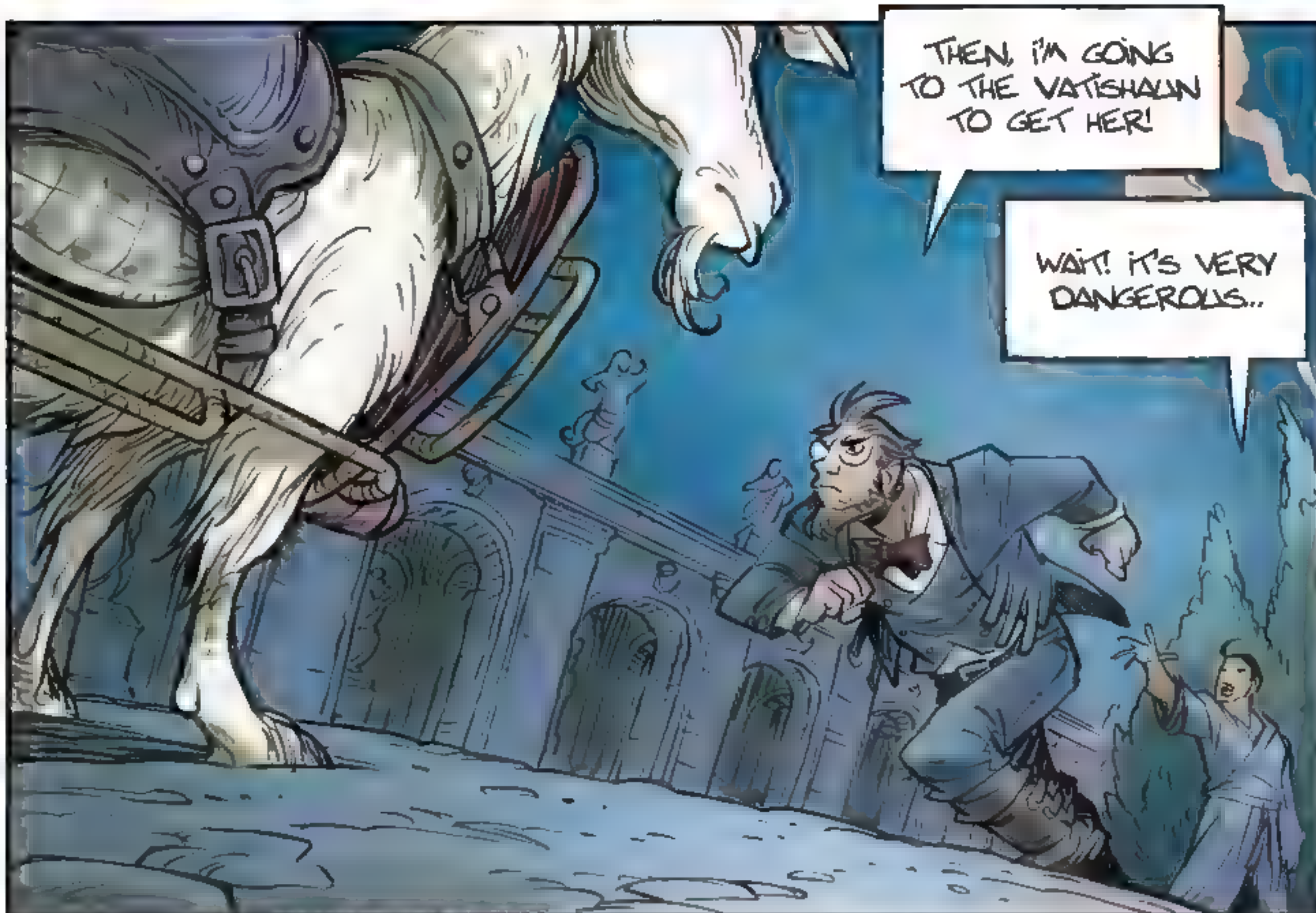
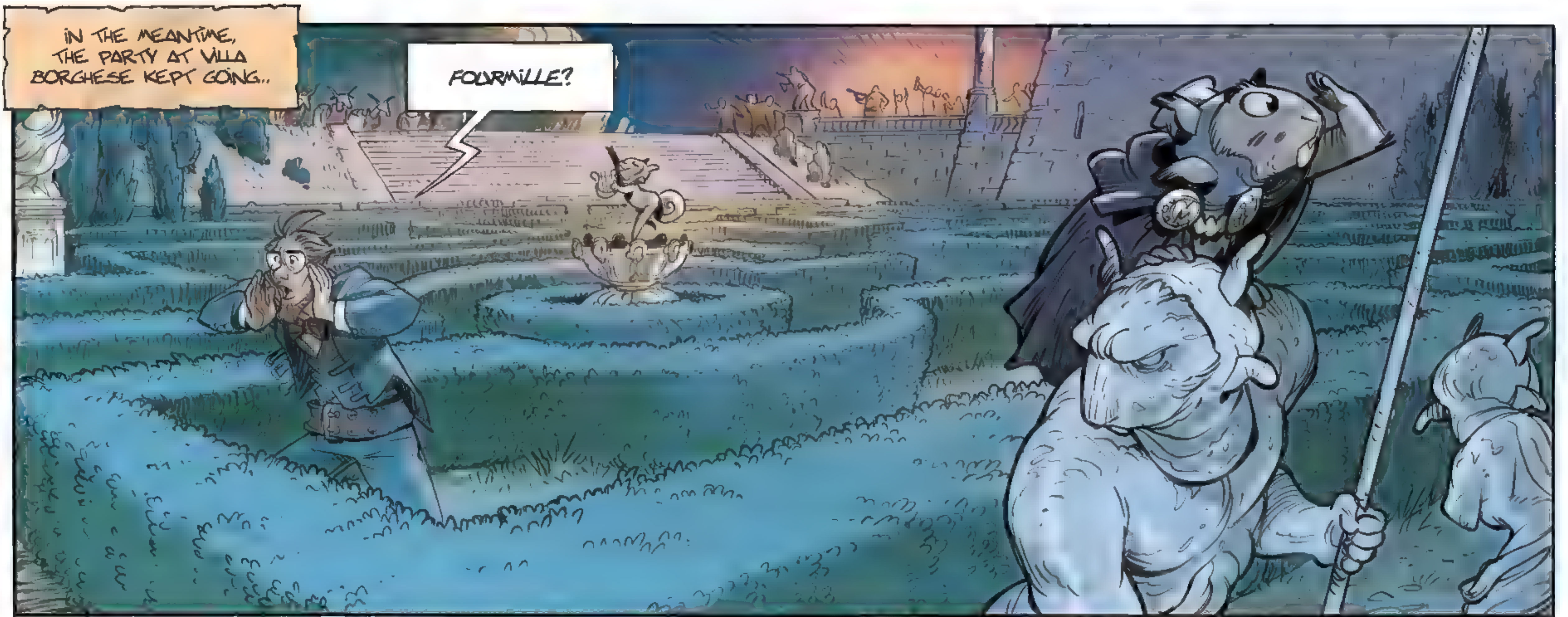
THE PONTIFICAL COUP CAN'T WAIT ANY LONGER, HIS HOLINESS TOOK OFF, HE'S CERTAINLY HIDING AT SAINT ANGEL CASTLE.

WE SAW THE SWISS GUARD AND THE LOYAL ZELGMAS MOVING TOWARDS THERE.

YES, WE'RE GOING TO LIGHT THE SIGNAL FIRE IN THE COUSLEUM TO REGROUP OUR PARTISANS.

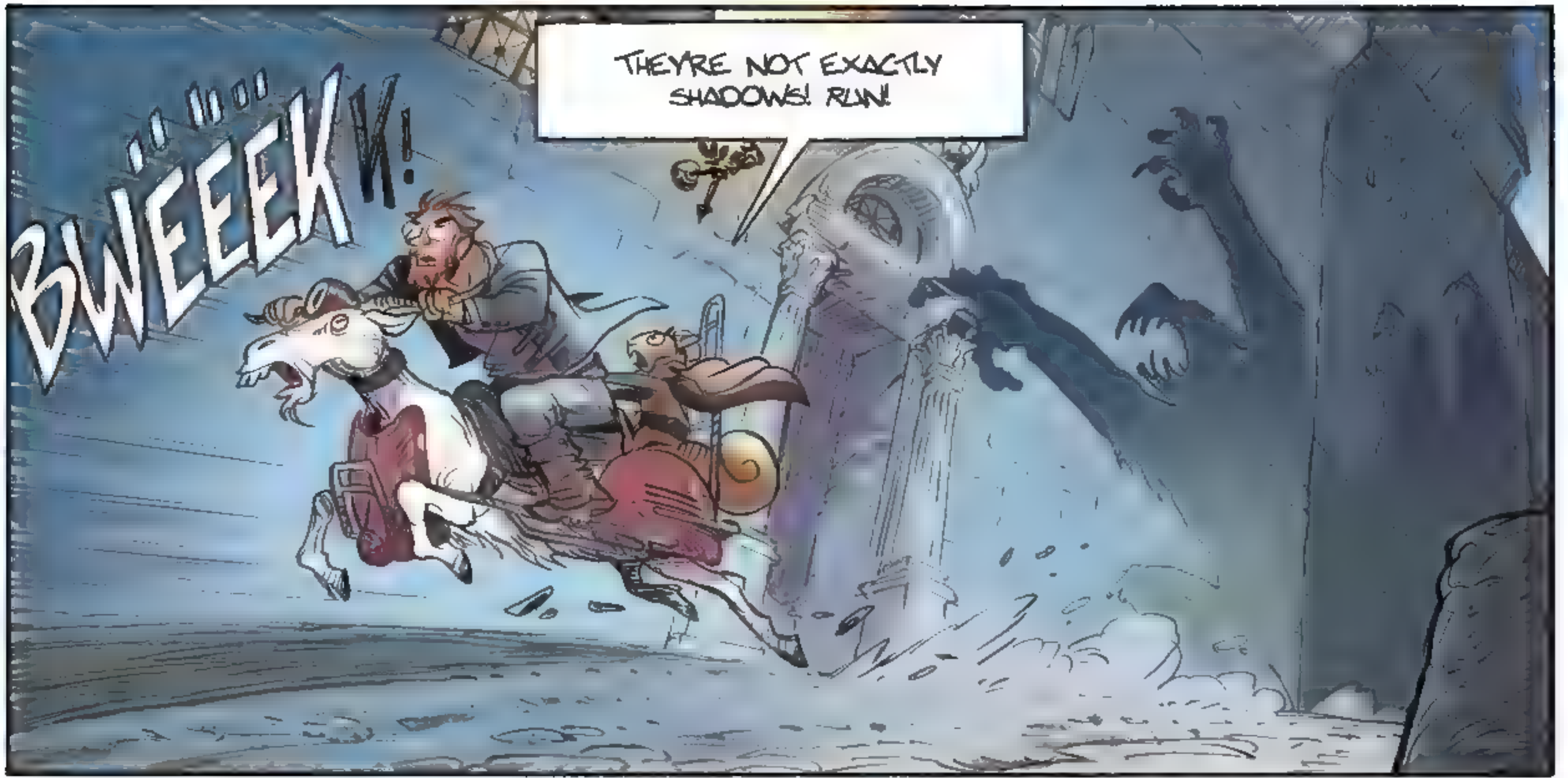
SO MUCH FOR DISCRETION...



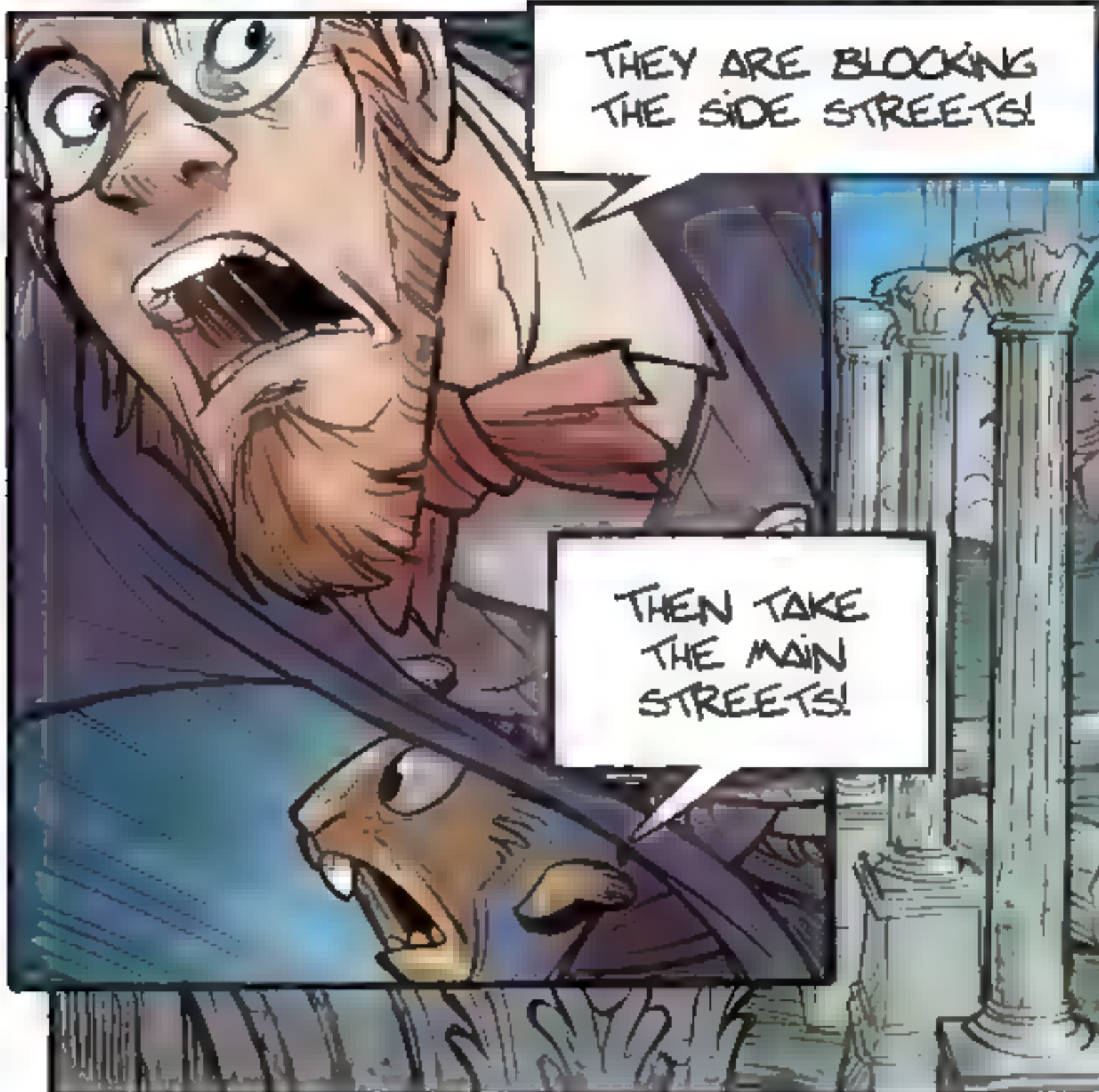




OH NOOOOO...



THEY'RE NOT EXACTLY SHADOWS! RUN!



THEY ARE BLOCKING THE SIDE STREETS!

THEN TAKE THE MAIN STREETS!



WELL, NO MORE STREETS!

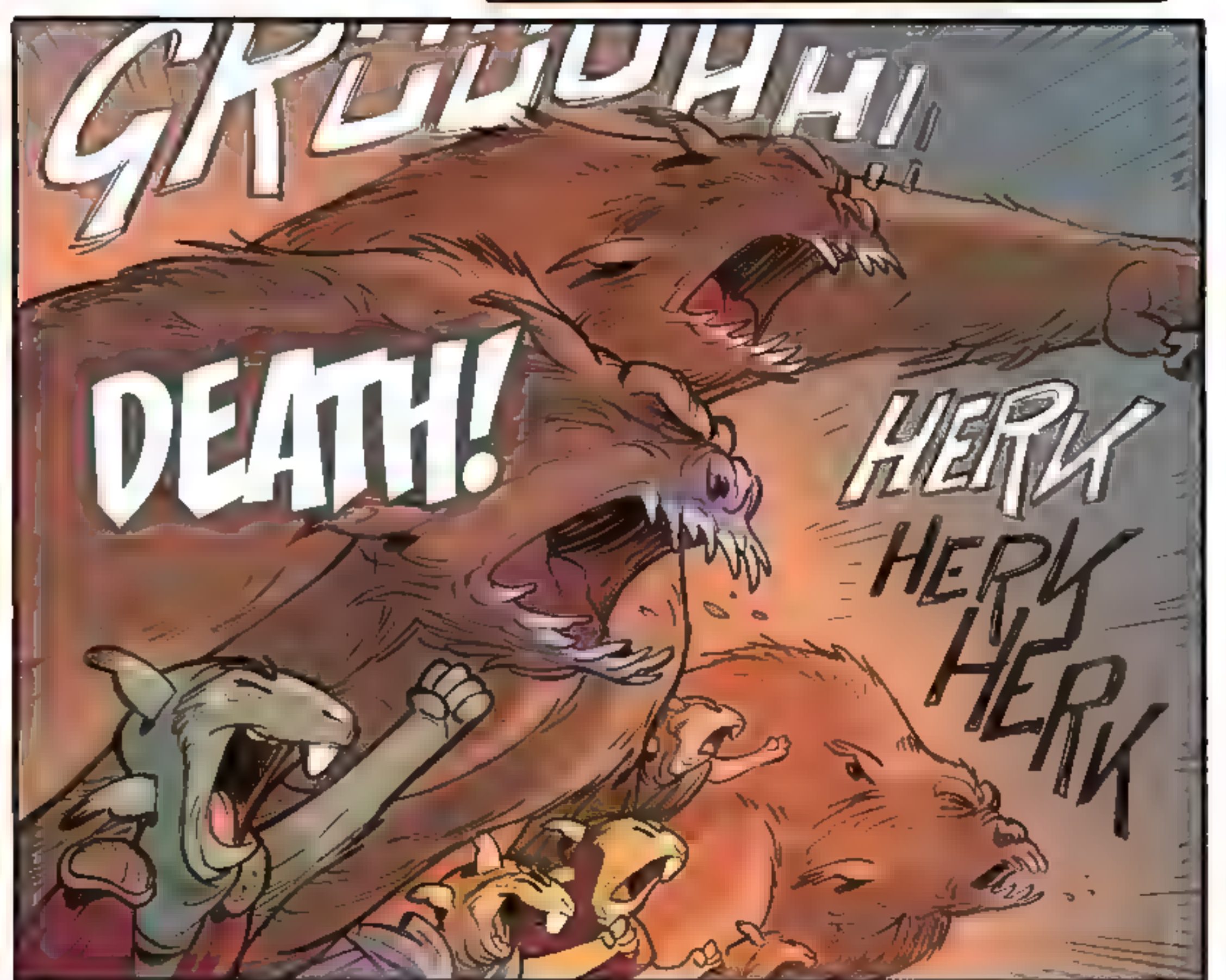
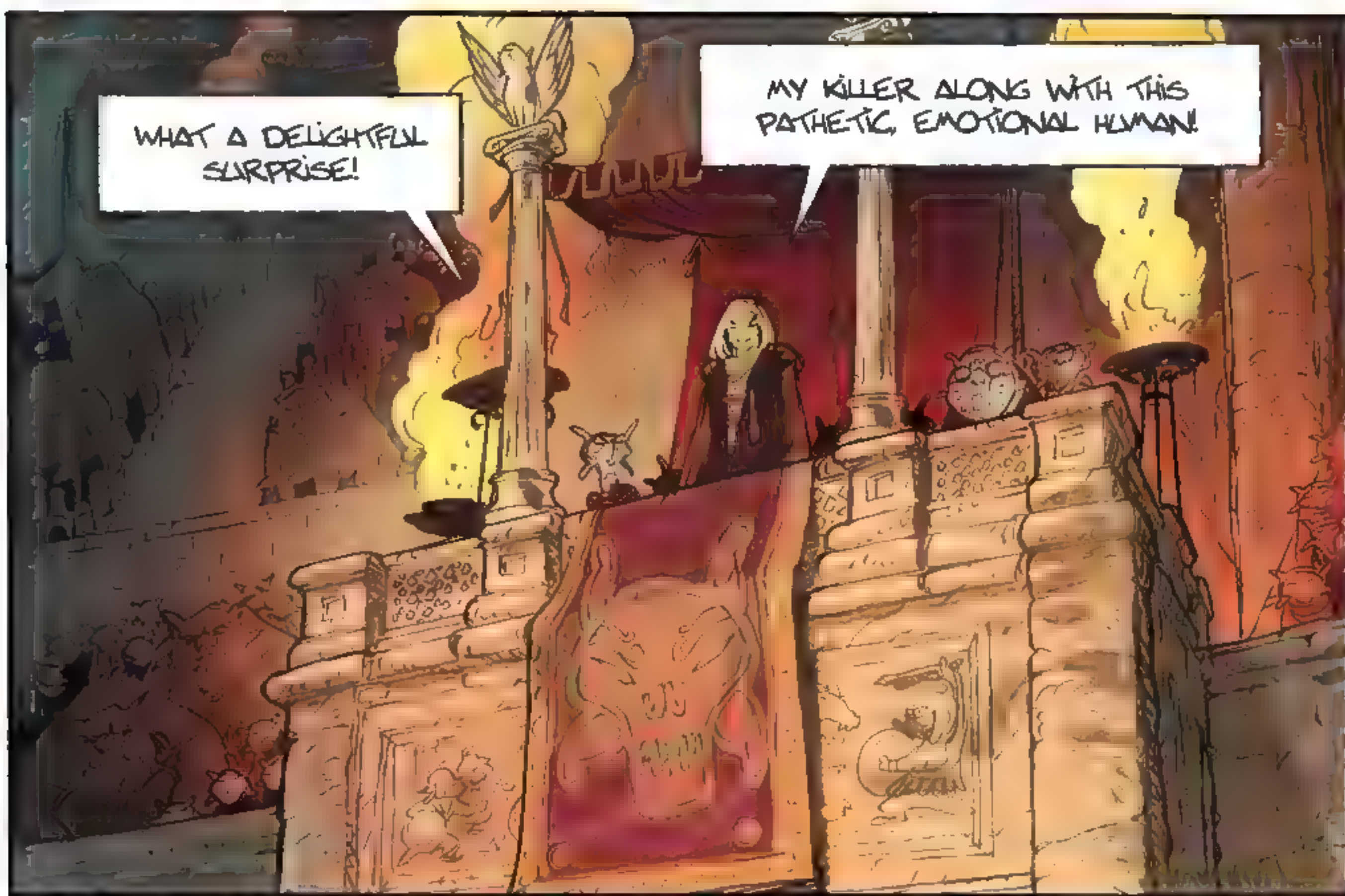
THIS IS THE ROMAN FORUM! HIDE IN THE COLOSSEUM!



THERE'S LIGHT! AND PEOPLE! WE'RE SAFE!

THIS WAY!

WAIT, MAYBE...



MY AUTHENTICIST FRIENDS! WHILE WE WAIT FOR THE ARRIVAL OF THE LAST BELIEVERS TO START THE ATTACK ON CASTEL SANT'ANGELO, LET'S ENTERTAIN OURSELVES WITH THIS CREATURE!



FOUR...
FOURVILLE???



PUT YOUR HELMET ON, WARRIOR!



RUN, FOURVILLE!
I'LL HOLD EM OFF!



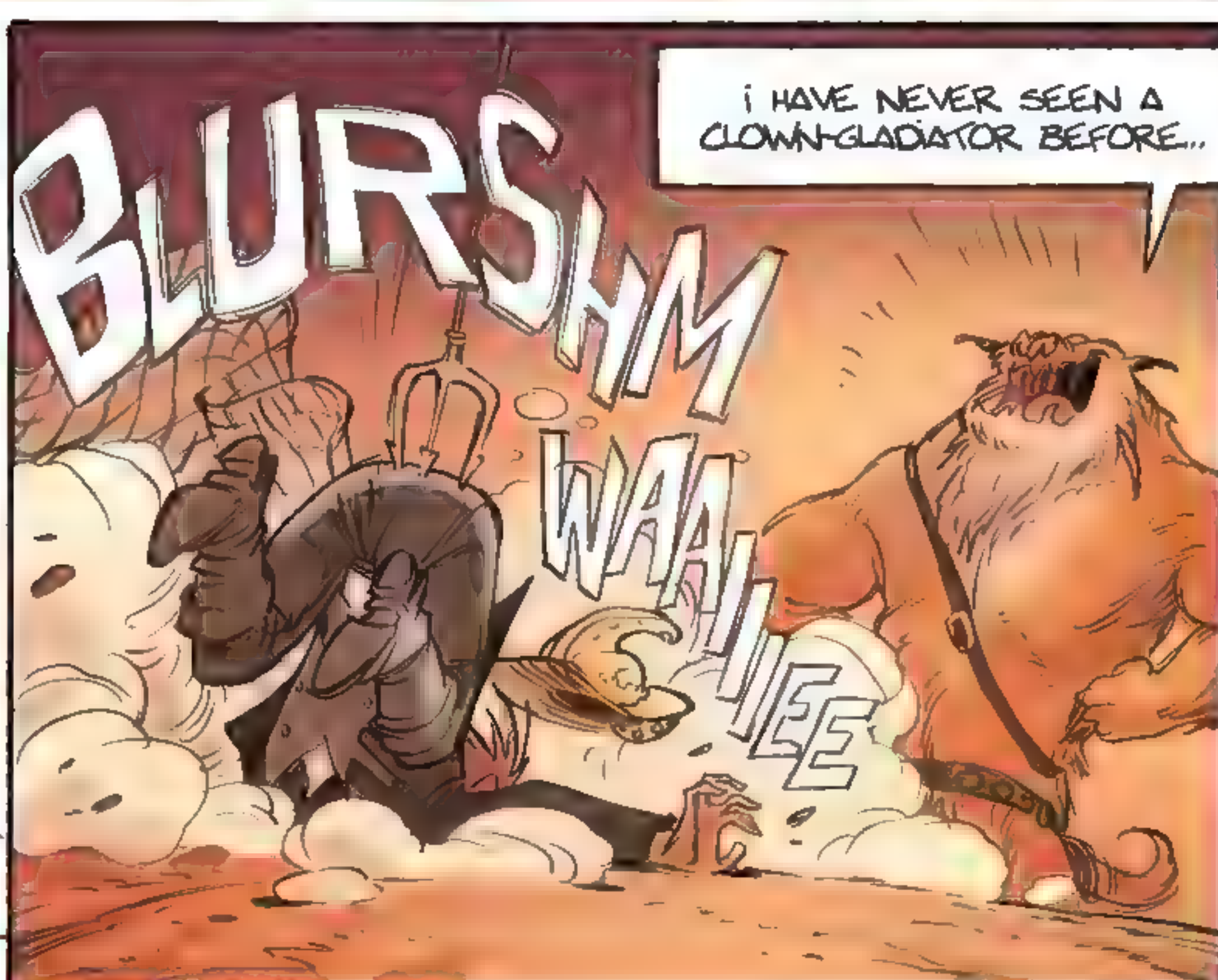
AHEM...



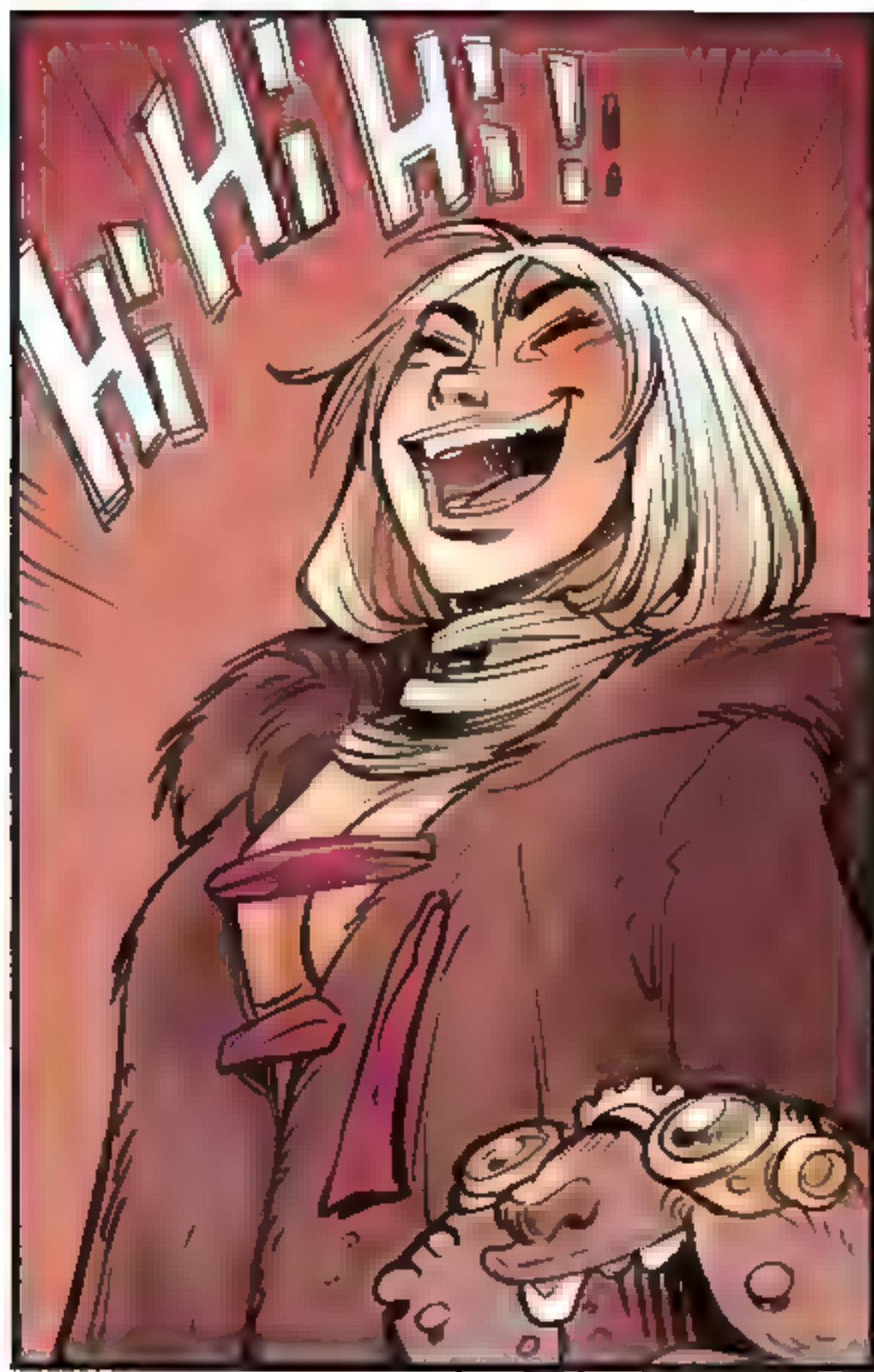
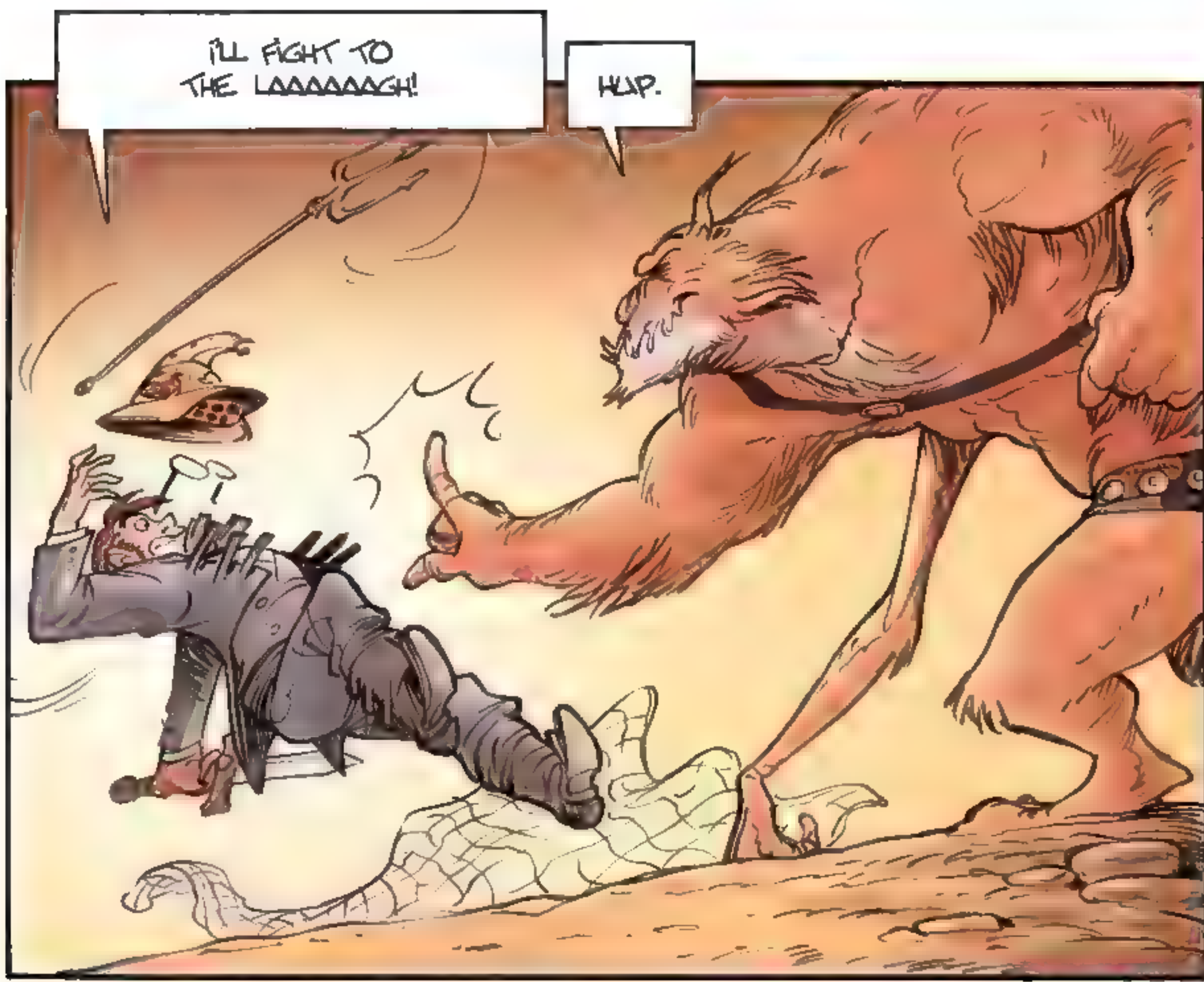
NOOOOO...



I HAVE NEVER SEEN A
CLOWN-GLADIATOR BEFORE...

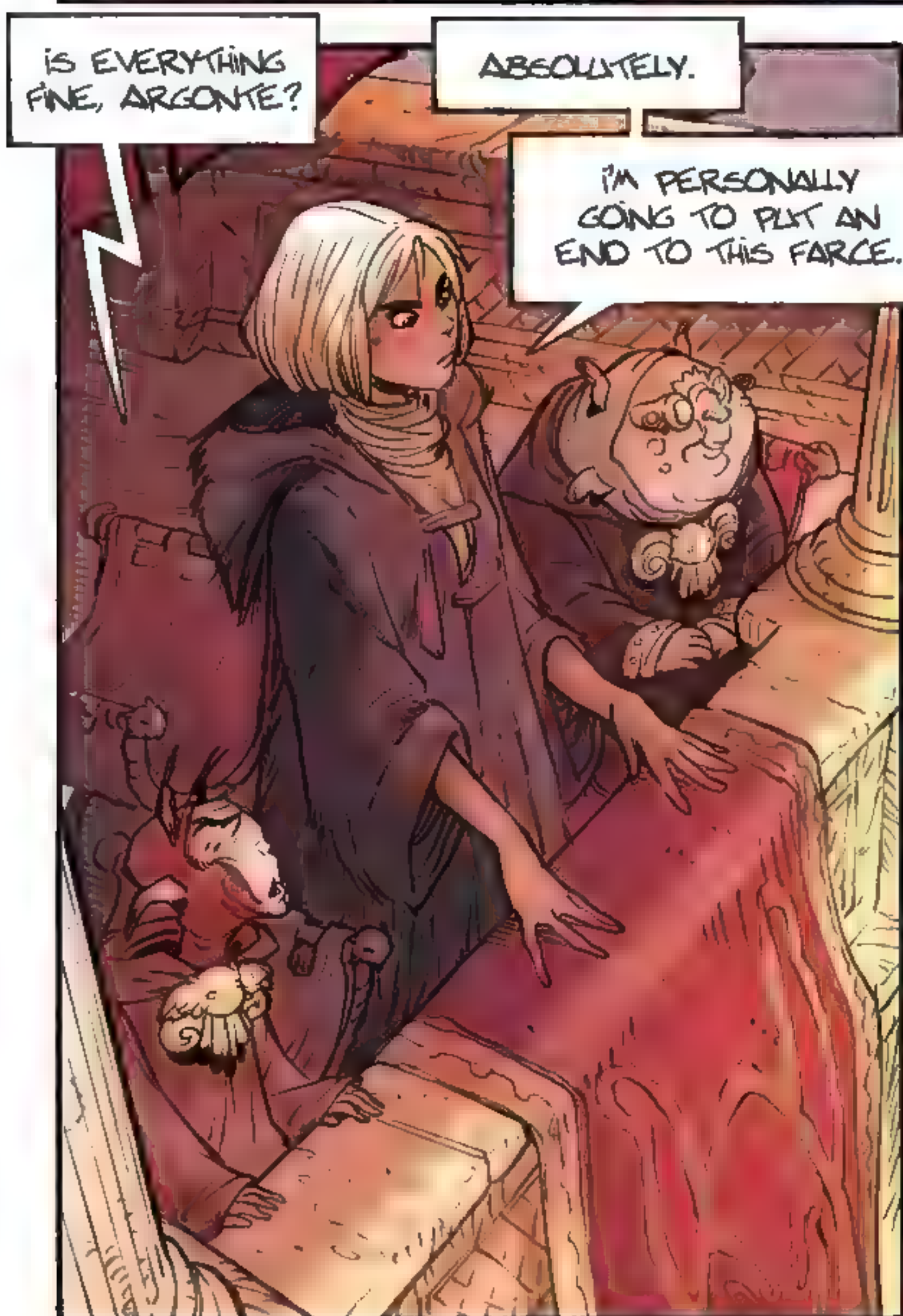
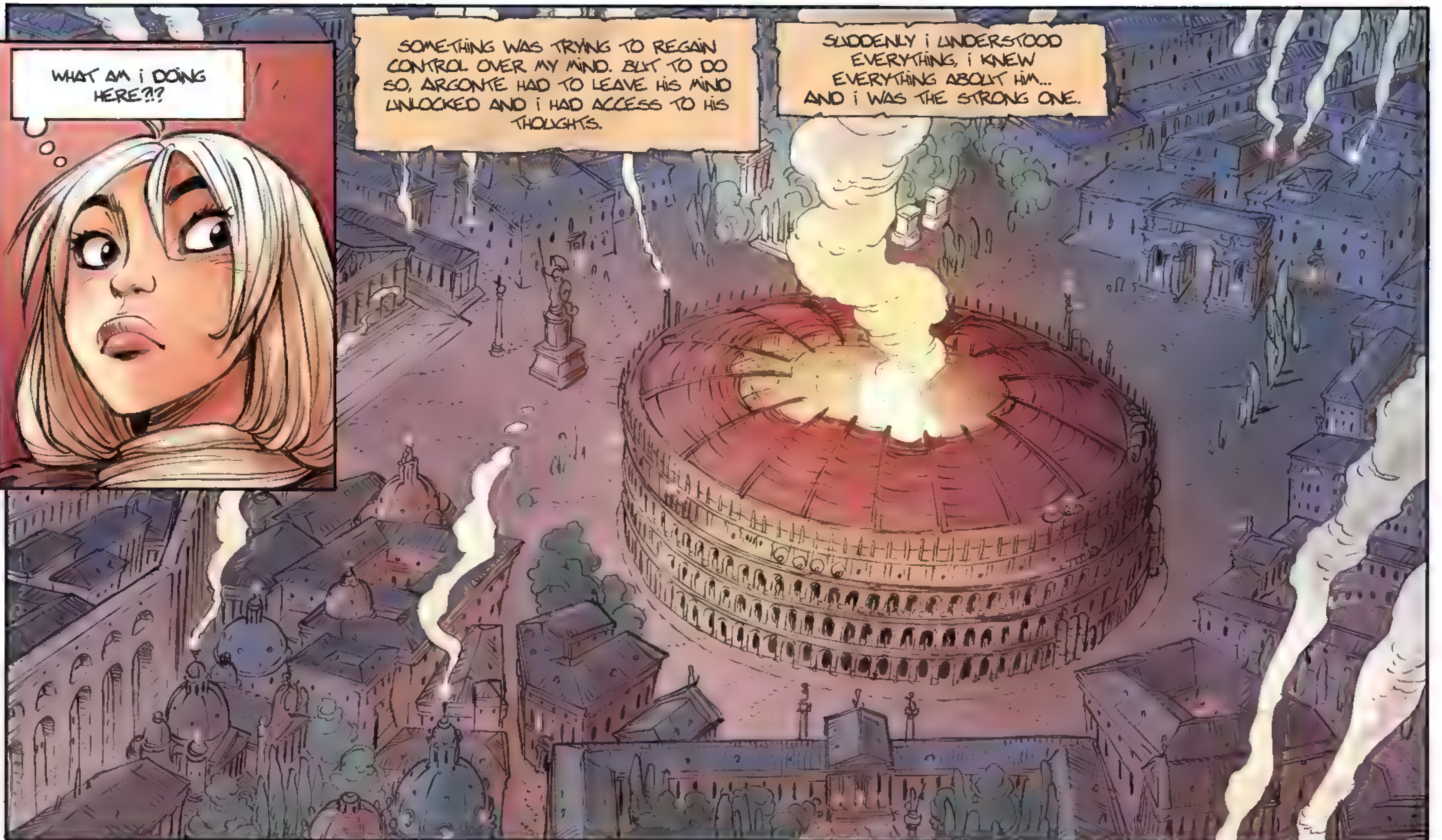


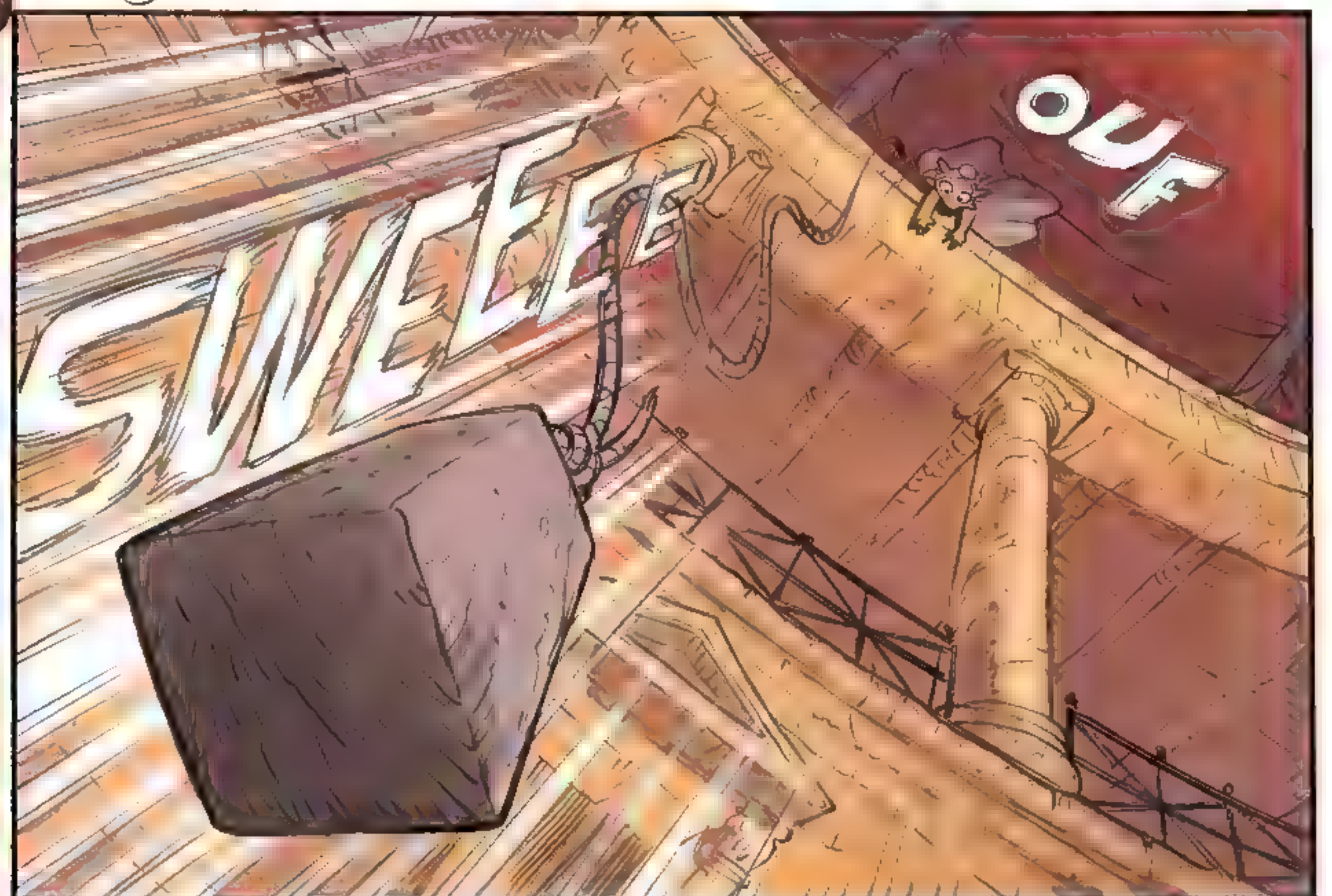
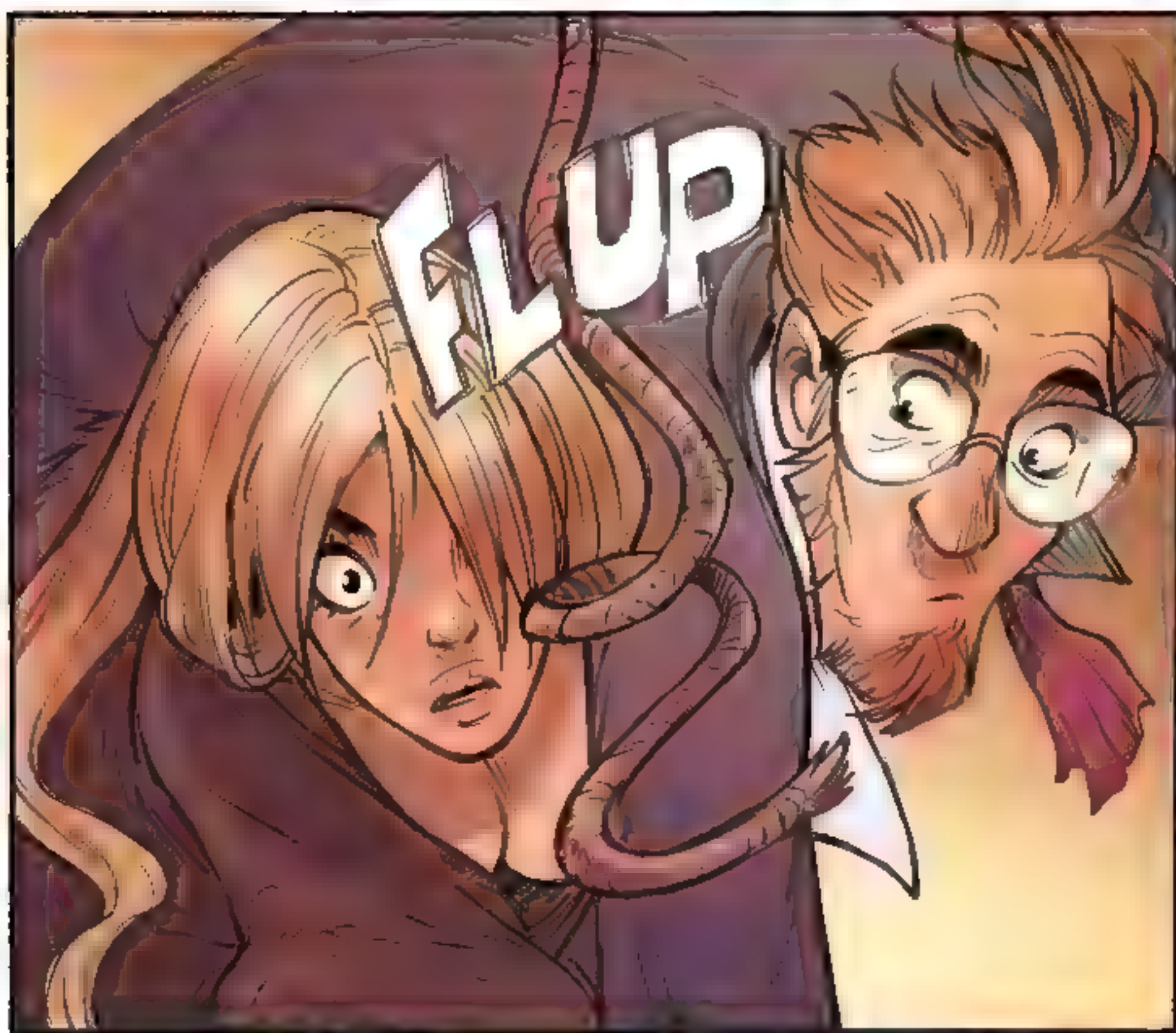
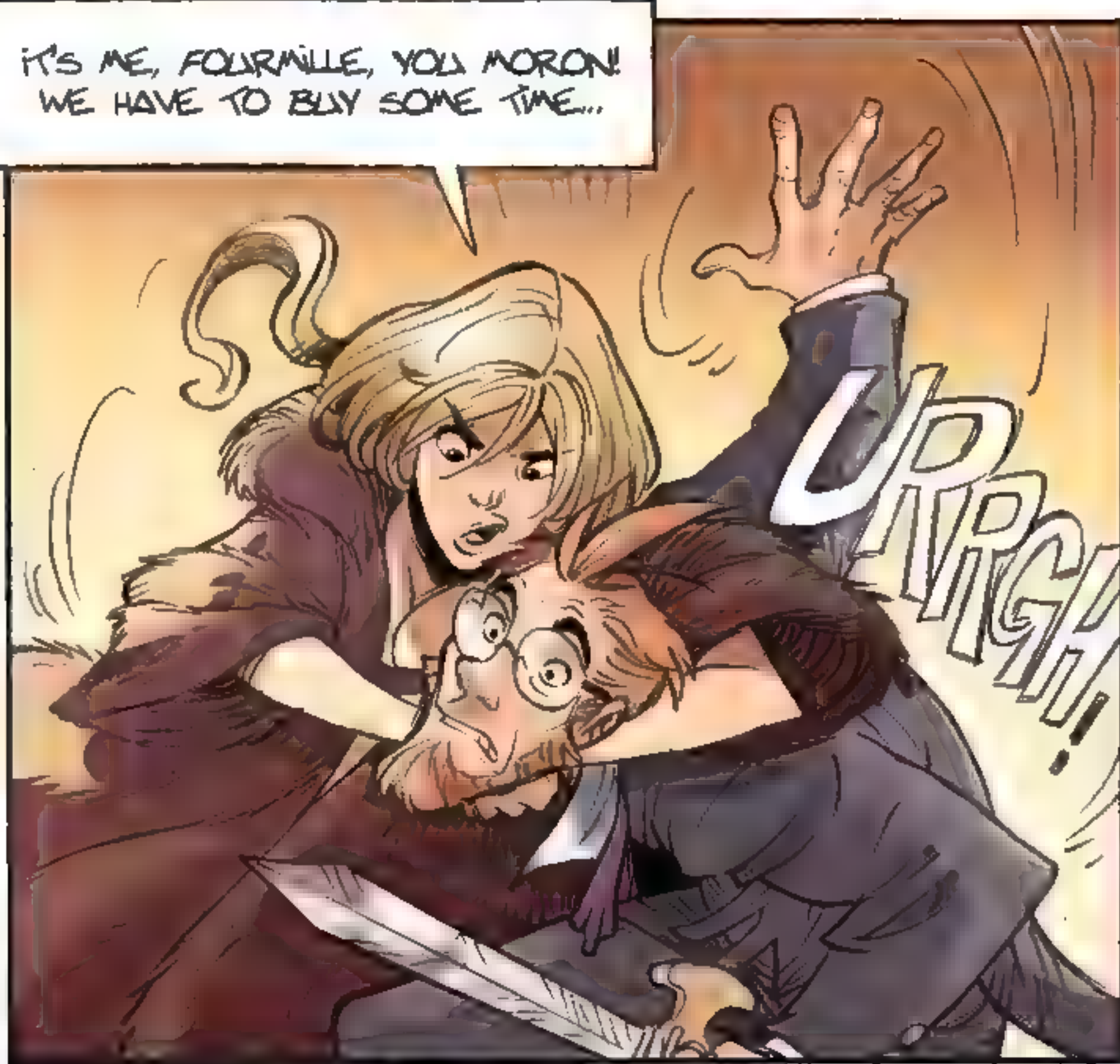
NO, ARGONTE!
DON'T LAUGH!
STAY FOCUSED
TO KEEP
YOUR GRIP
ON THIS BODY!

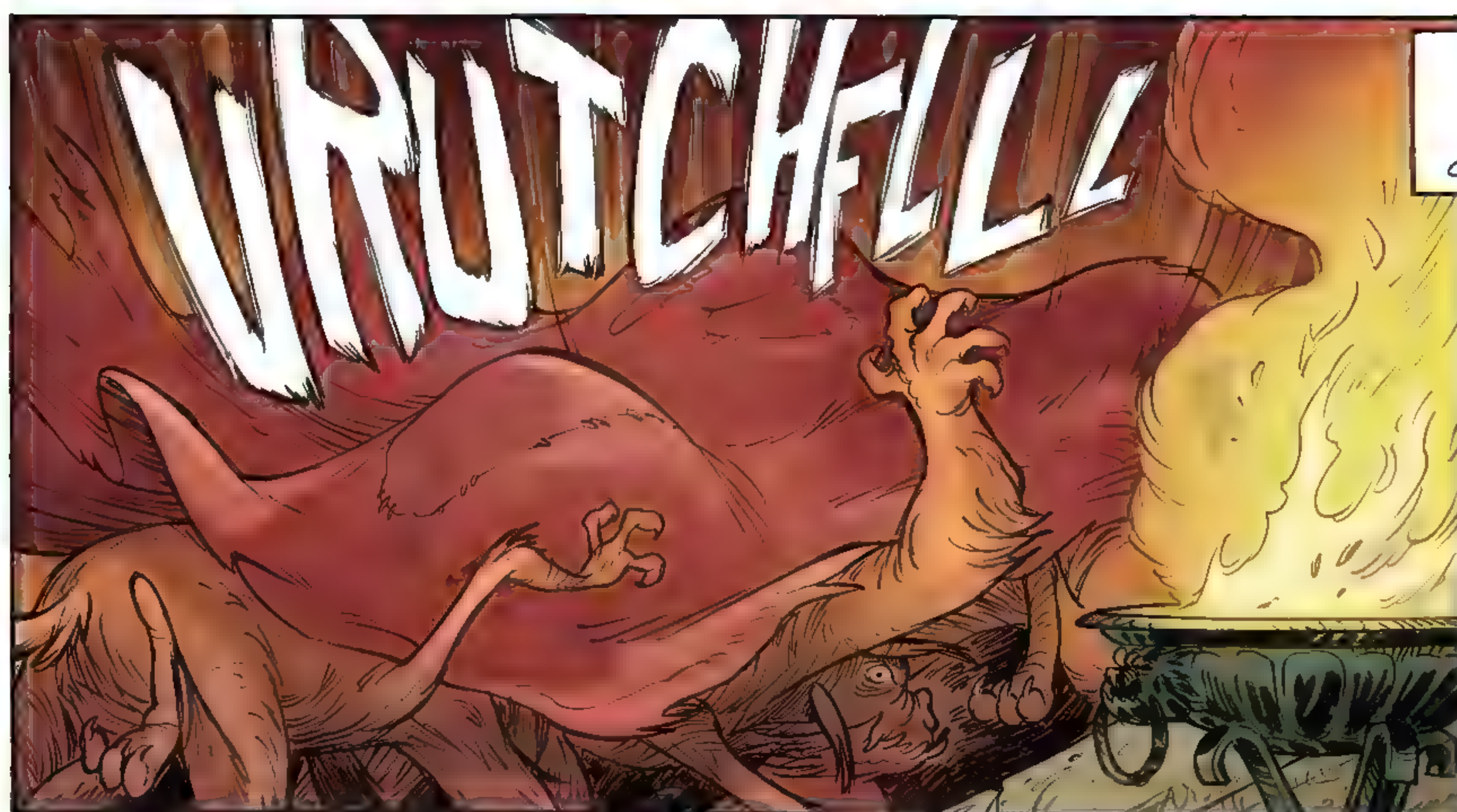
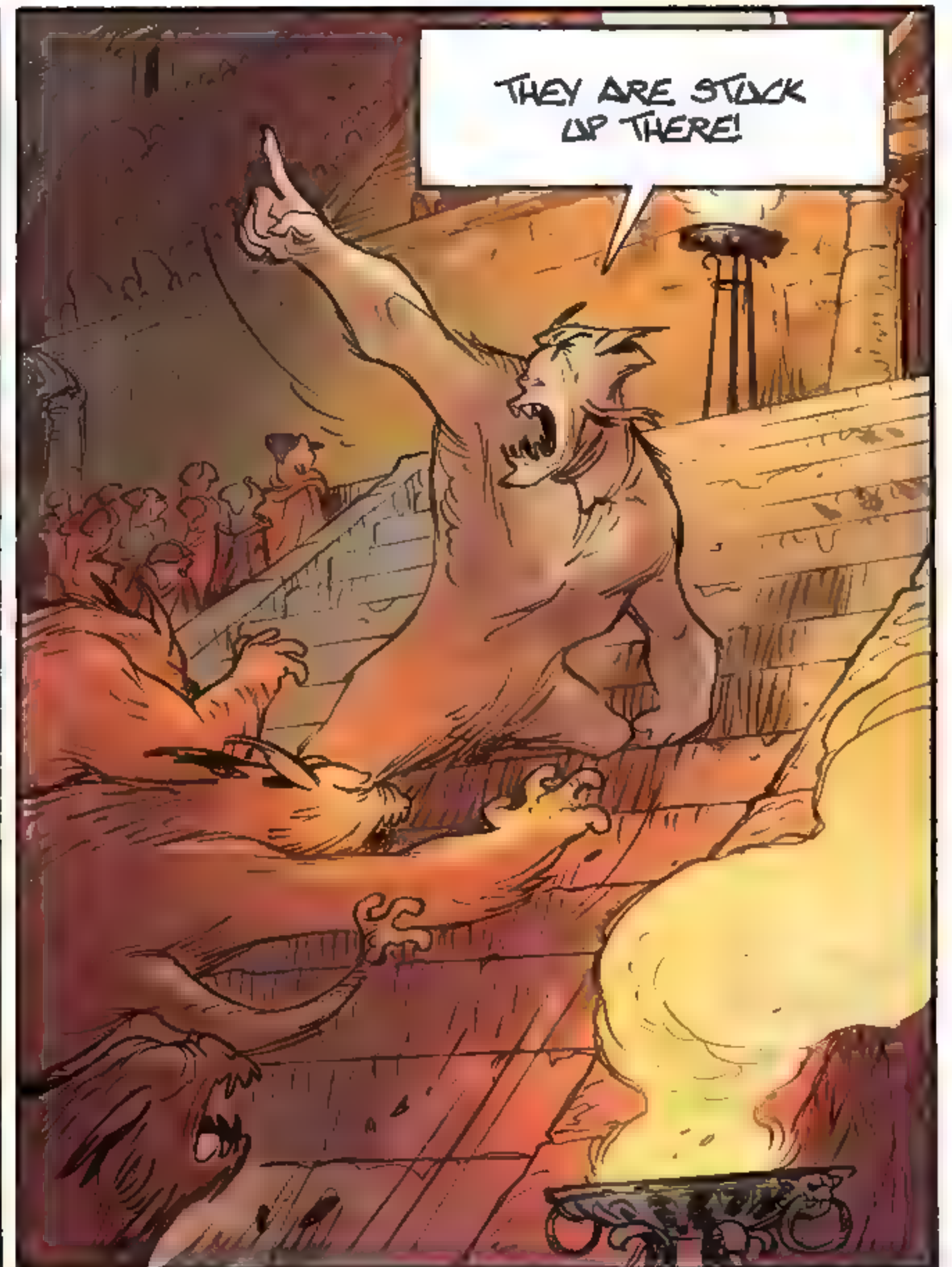
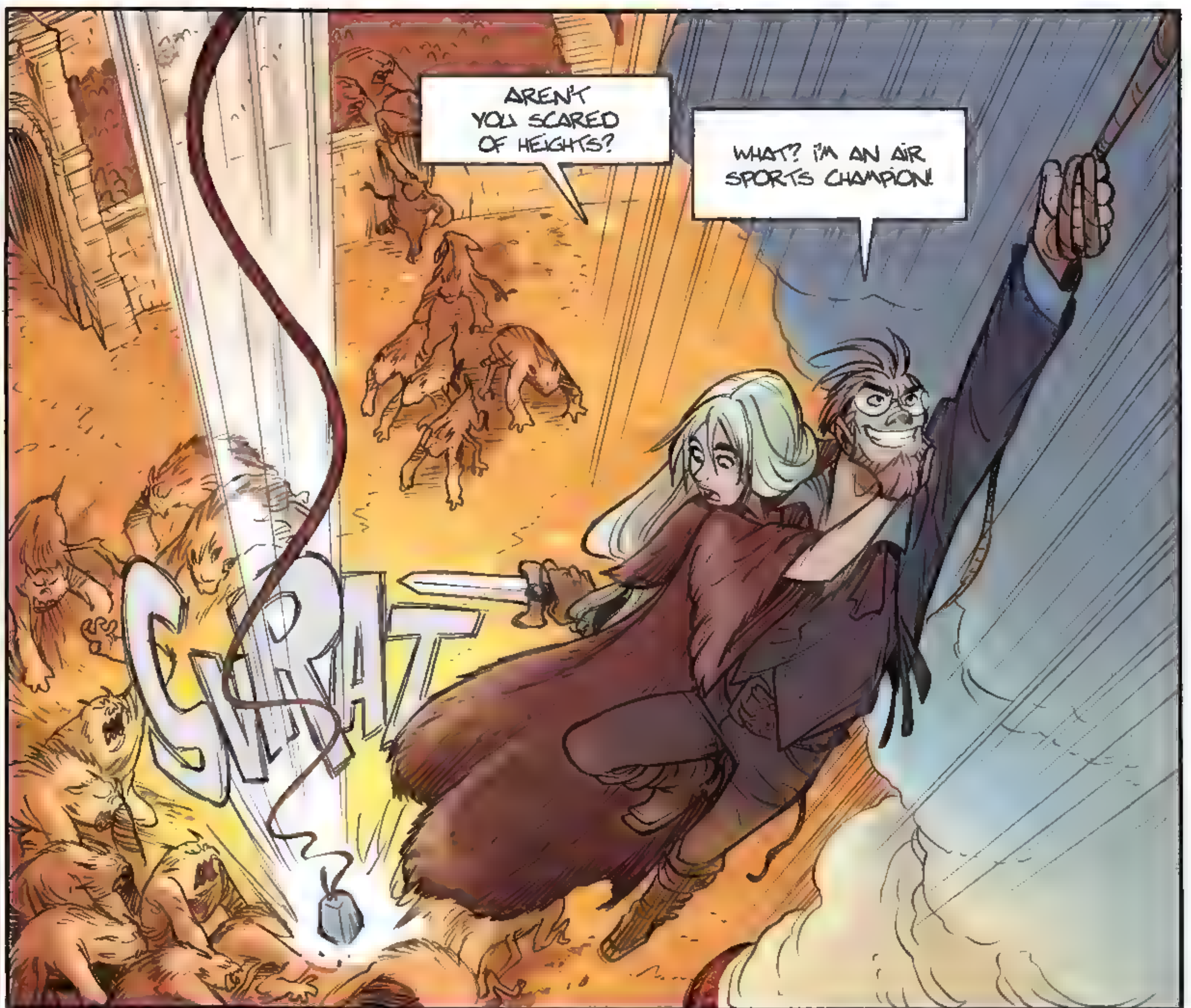


SOMETHING WAS TRYING TO REGAIN CONTROL OVER MY MIND. BUT TO DO SO, ARGONTE HAD TO LEAVE HIS MIND UNLOCKED AND I HAD ACCESS TO HIS THOUGHTS.

SUDDENLY I UNDERSTOOD EVERYTHING. I KNEW EVERYTHING ABOUT HIM... AND I WAS THE STRONG ONE.









WHAT DID THEY
COME UP WITH??



THIS ISN'T WORKING!
WE'RE FALLING!

WAIT UNTIL
WE GET OVER
THE FIRE...



THERE WE GO! THE HOT
WARM AIR MAKES US
GO UP!



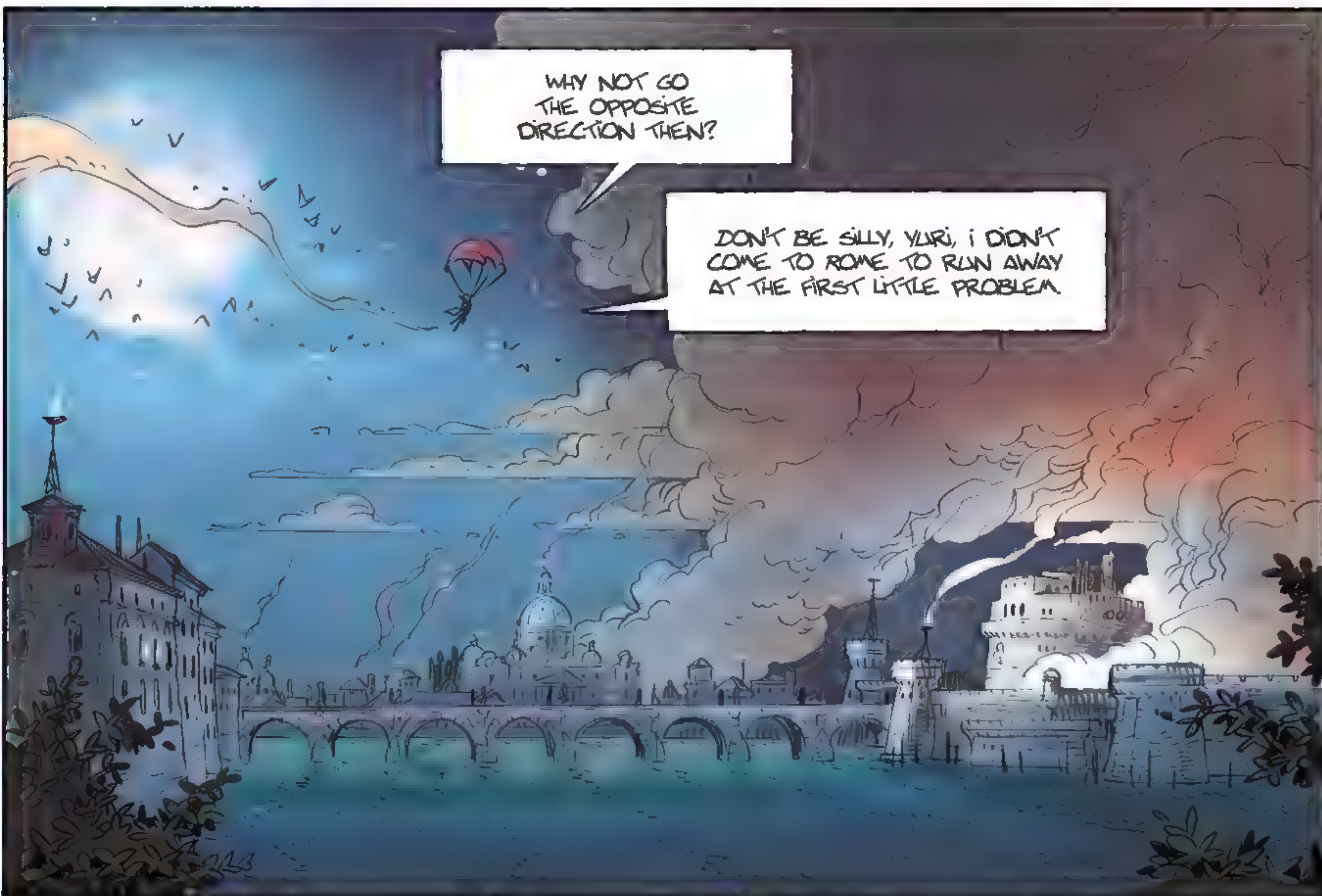
YOU DIDN'T BELIEVE ME WHEN
I TOLD YOU I WAS A CHAMPION
PARAGLIDER. HUH?

NO NEED TO ALWAYS
BRAG, IT'S OK!



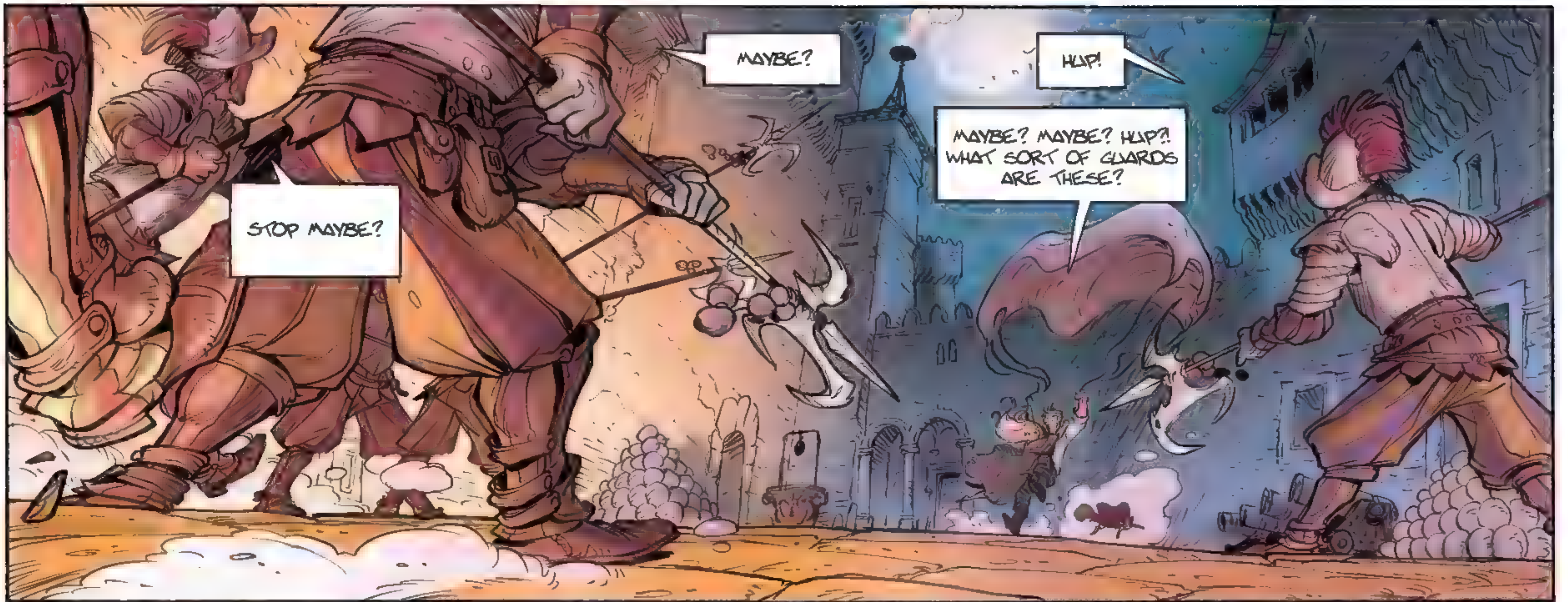
NOW WE'RE HIGH
ENOUGH TO GO
WHEREVER WE WANT!

CASTLE SAINT
ANGE. THAT'S
WHERE THEY'LL ATTACK



WHY NOT GO
THE OPPOSITE
DIRECTION THEN?

DON'T BE SILLY, YURI, I DIDN'T
COME TO ROME TO RUN AWAY
AT THE FIRST LITTLE PROBLEM.



MAYBE?

HUP!

MAYBE? MAYBE? HUP?
WHAT SORT OF GUARDS
ARE THESE?

STOP MAYBE?



WE'RE HERE
TO WARN YOU
THE ALTHEMISTS
ARE PREPARING
AN ATTACK

YES, IT'S LIKE THEM
TO SEND SPIES
BEFORE, MAYBE!



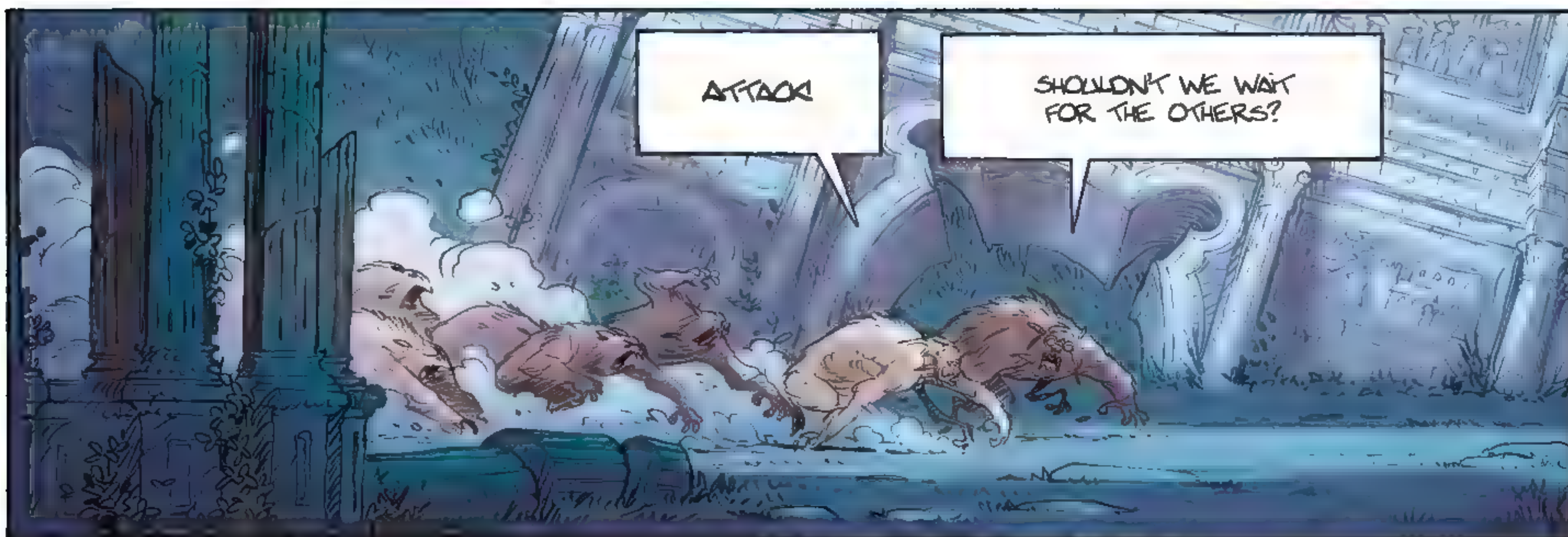
SIGSBERT
MOTAFUNE!

MASTER
GLONTODARGE!



I'M GLAD TO SEE
YOU! HER HOLINESS
IS WAITING FOR
YOU AND WANTS
TO TALK TO YOU

OH!
PERSONALLY?

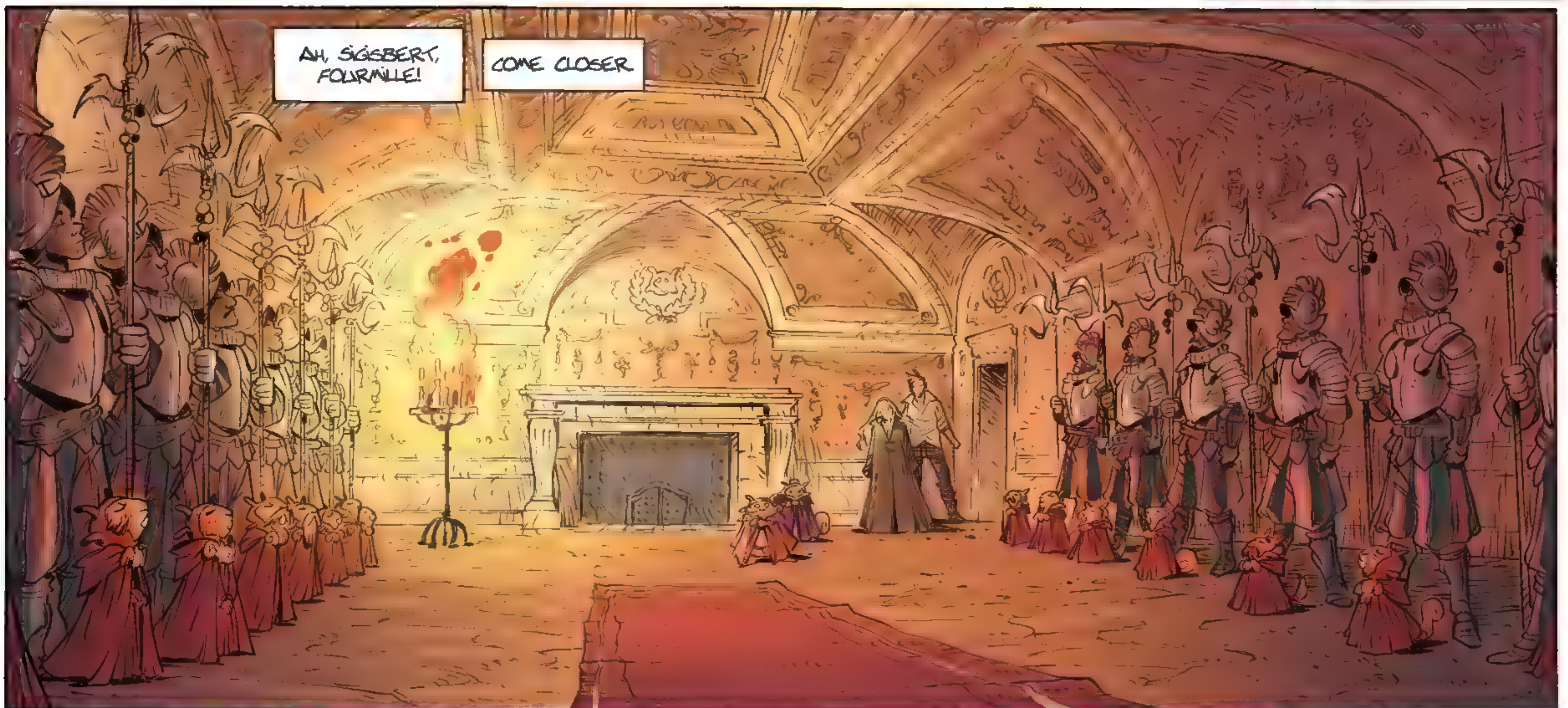


ATTACK!

SHOULDN'T WE WAIT
FOR THE OTHERS?

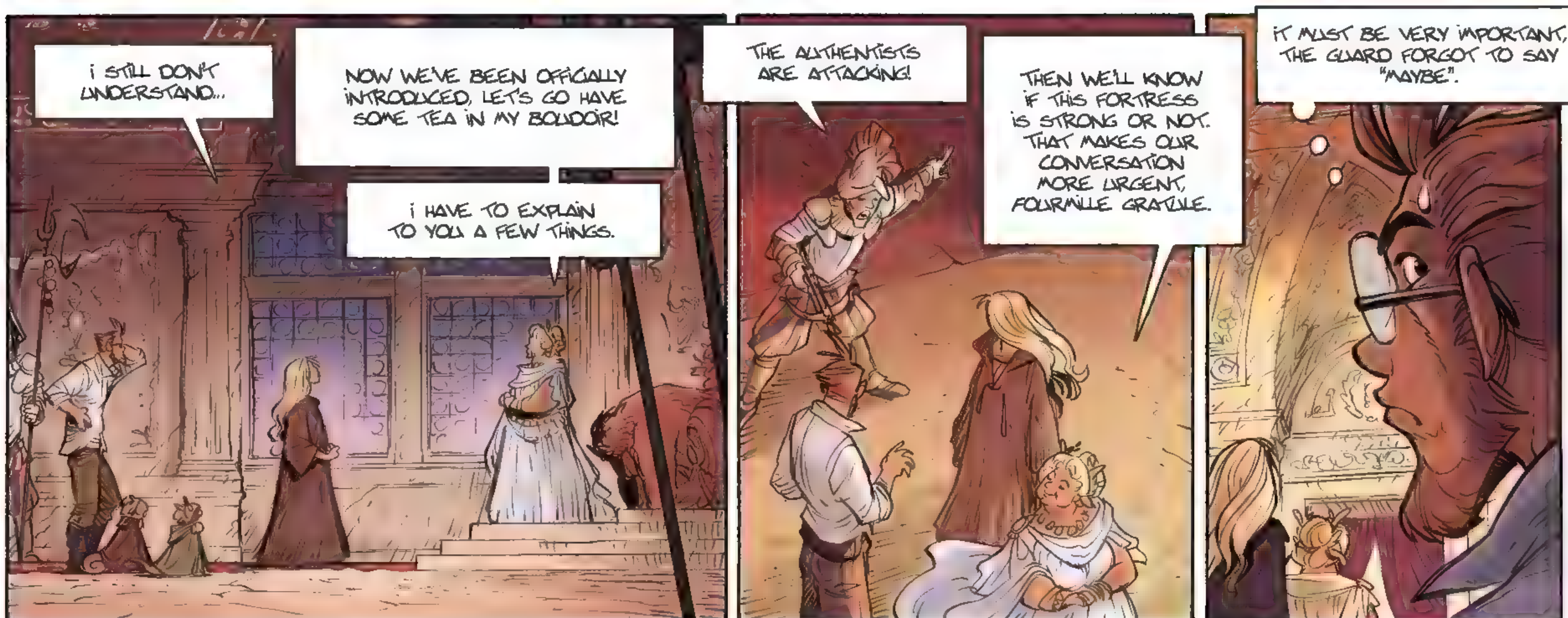
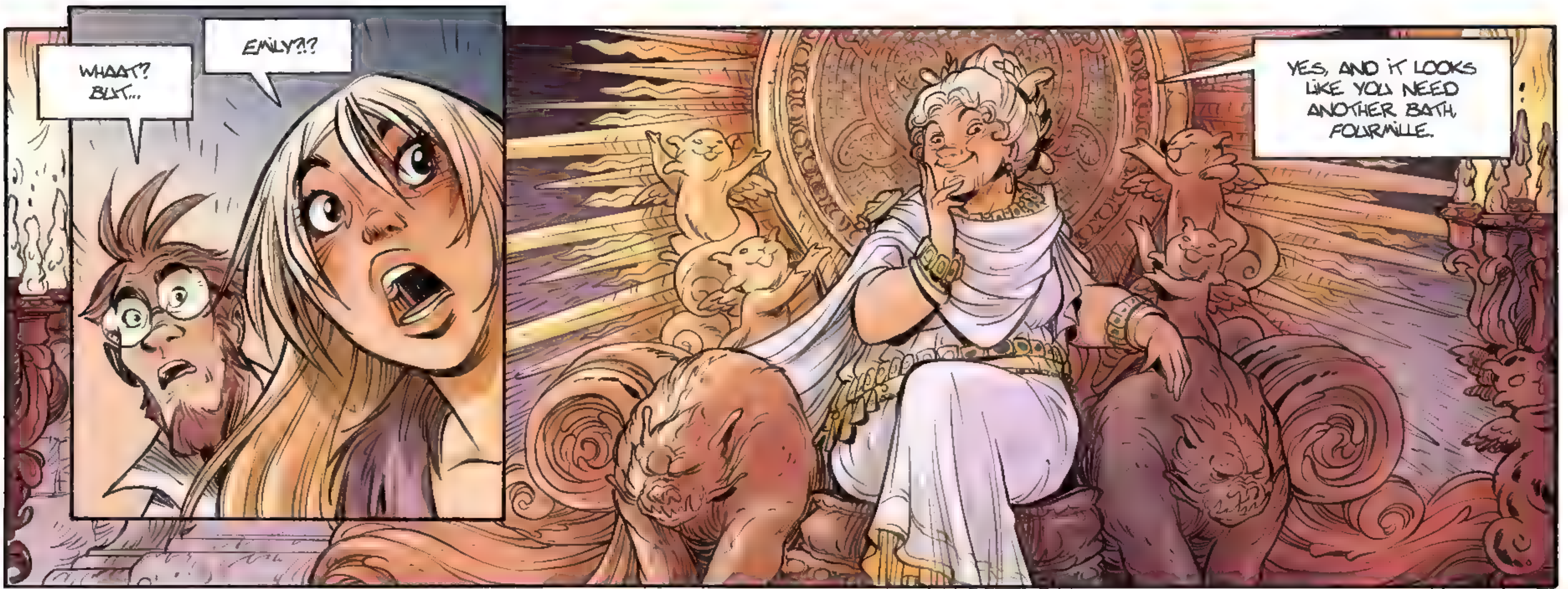


ALEA JACTA EST! WE MUST
TAKE SAINT ANGE AS SOON
AS POSSIBLE AND ELIMINATE
HER NAUGHTINESS, HUM...
HOLINESS.



AH, SIGSBERT,
FOURNILLE!

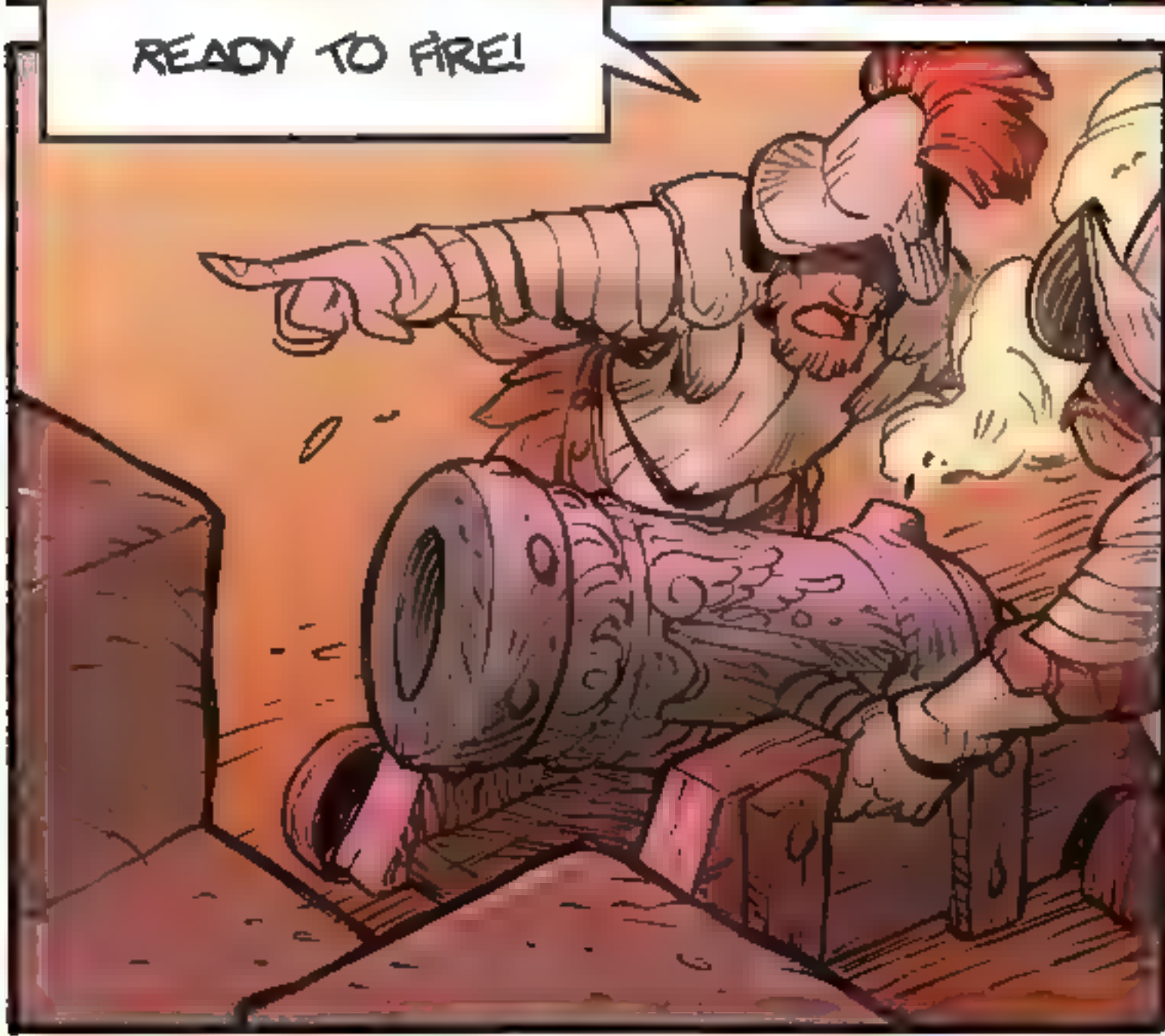
COME CLOSER



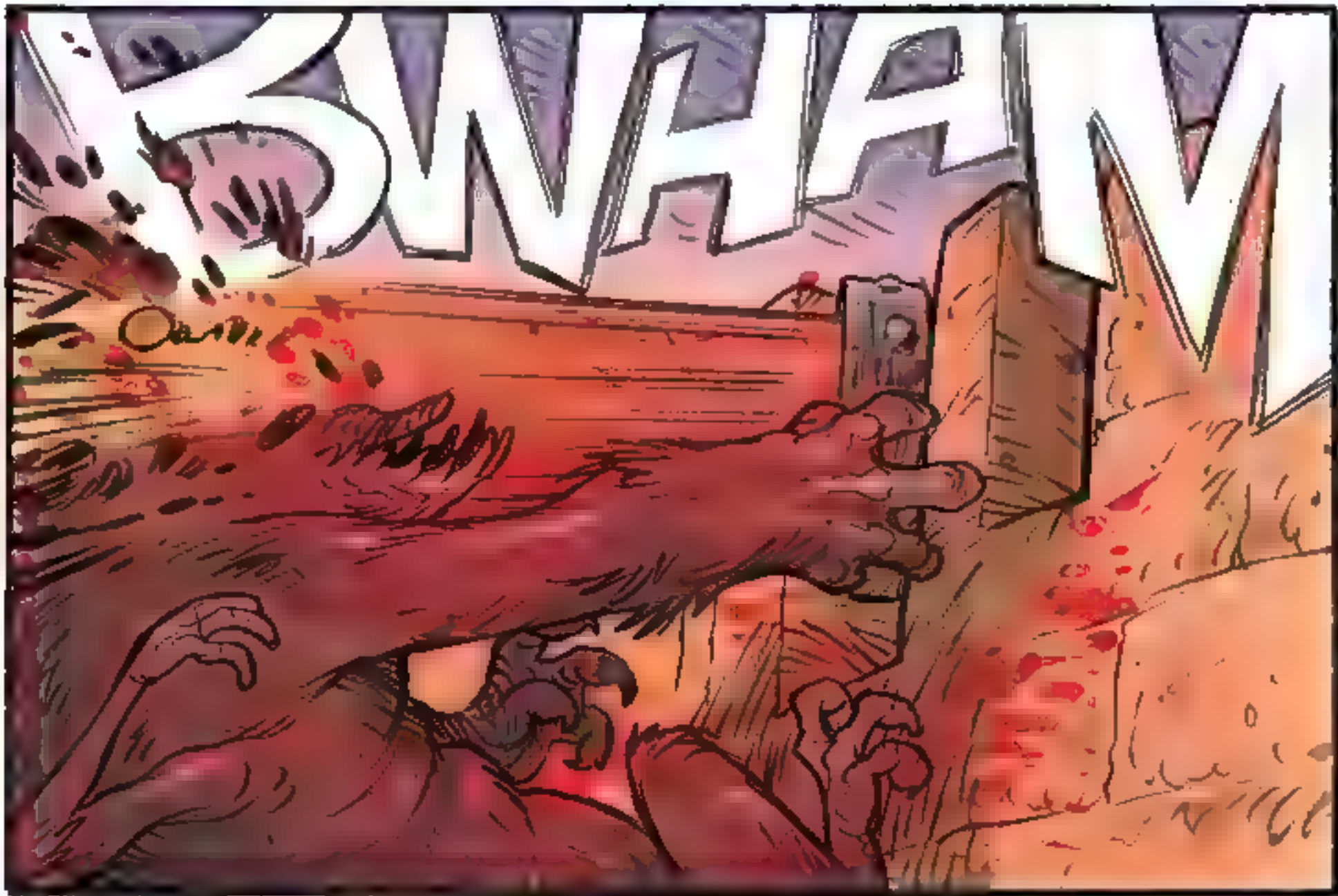
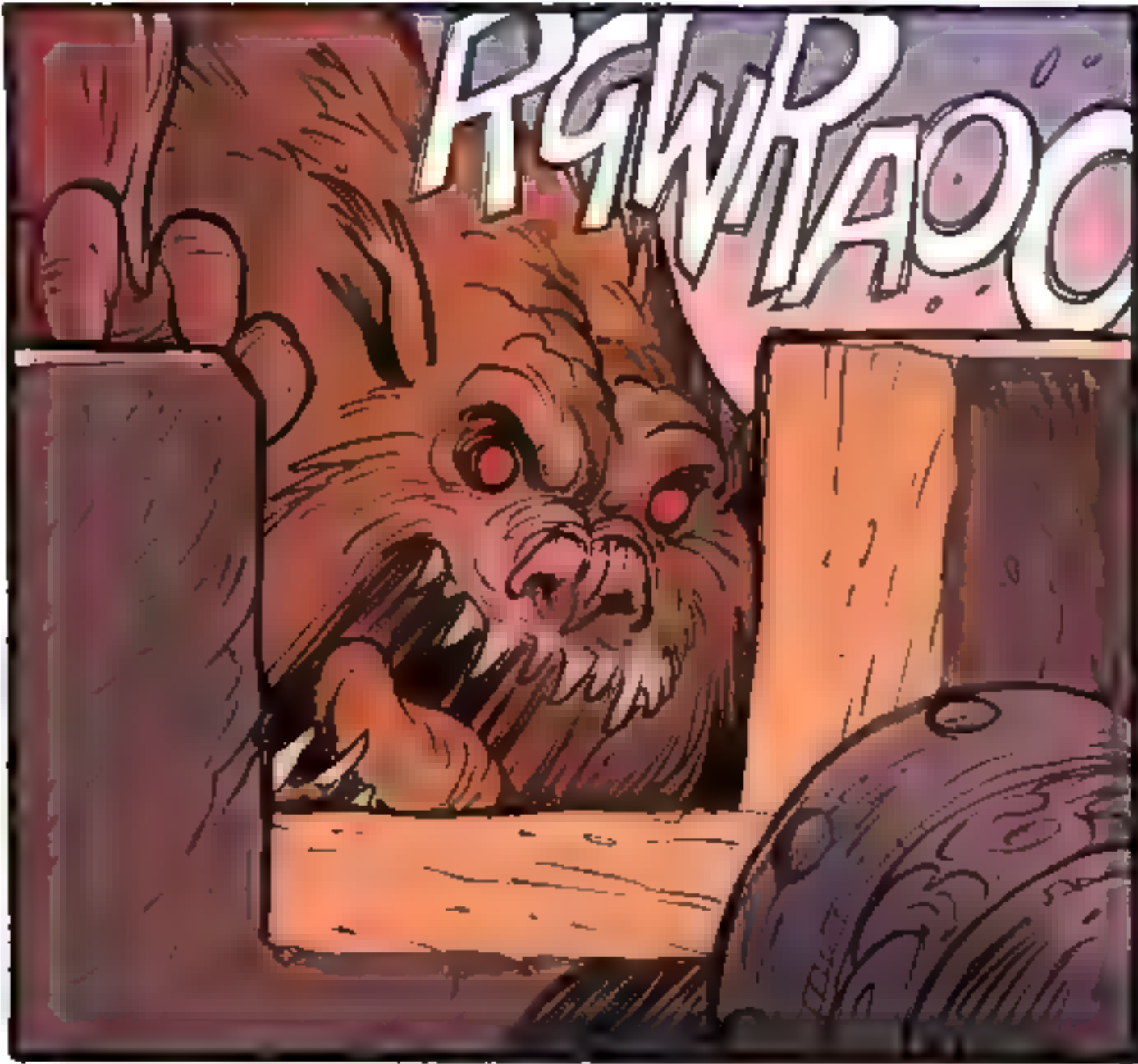


AT THE FIRST LIGHT OF DAWN, HUNDREDS OF MONSTERS WERE CONVERGING, READY TO FLOOD CASTLE SAINT ANGE, THE LAST REFUGE OF THE ZELGMAS.

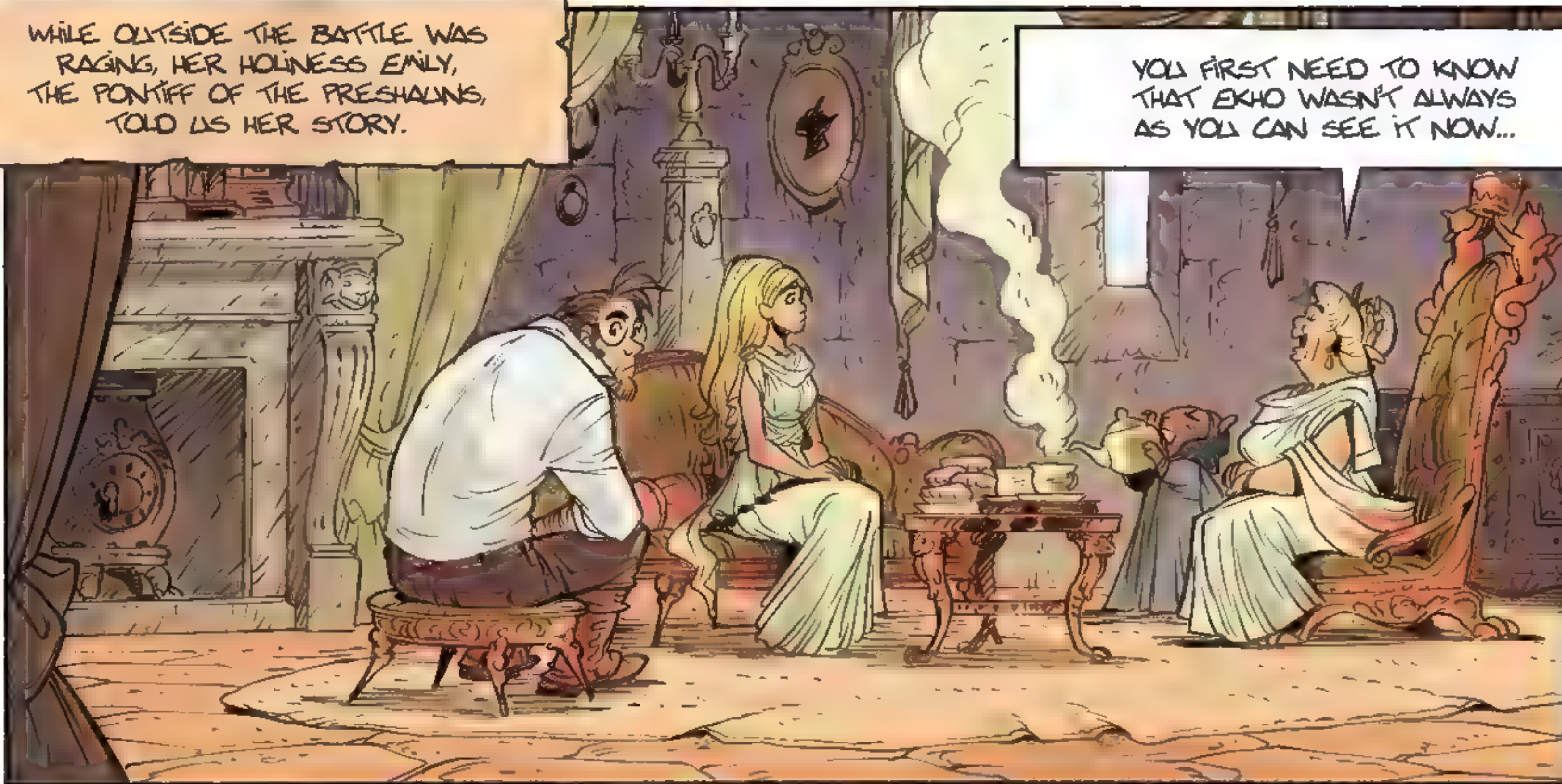
SPRAY THEM! BOILING OIL! THEY MUSTN'T REACH THE FORTIFICATIONS!



READY TO FIRE!



WHILE OUTSIDE THE BATTLE WAS RAGING, HER HOLINESS EMILY, THE PONTIFF OF THE PRESHAUNS, TOLD US HER STORY.



YOU FIRST NEED TO KNOW THAT EXHO WASN'T ALWAYS AS YOU CAN SEE IT NOW...



I WAS THE FIRST HUMAN BEING TO SET FOOT IN THIS WORLD, TWO HUNDREDS YEARS AGO...

MY NAME WAS THEN EMILY AUSTEN, AND I WAS LIVING ON THE NORTHUMBERLAND COAST, AT THE SCOTTISH BORDER.



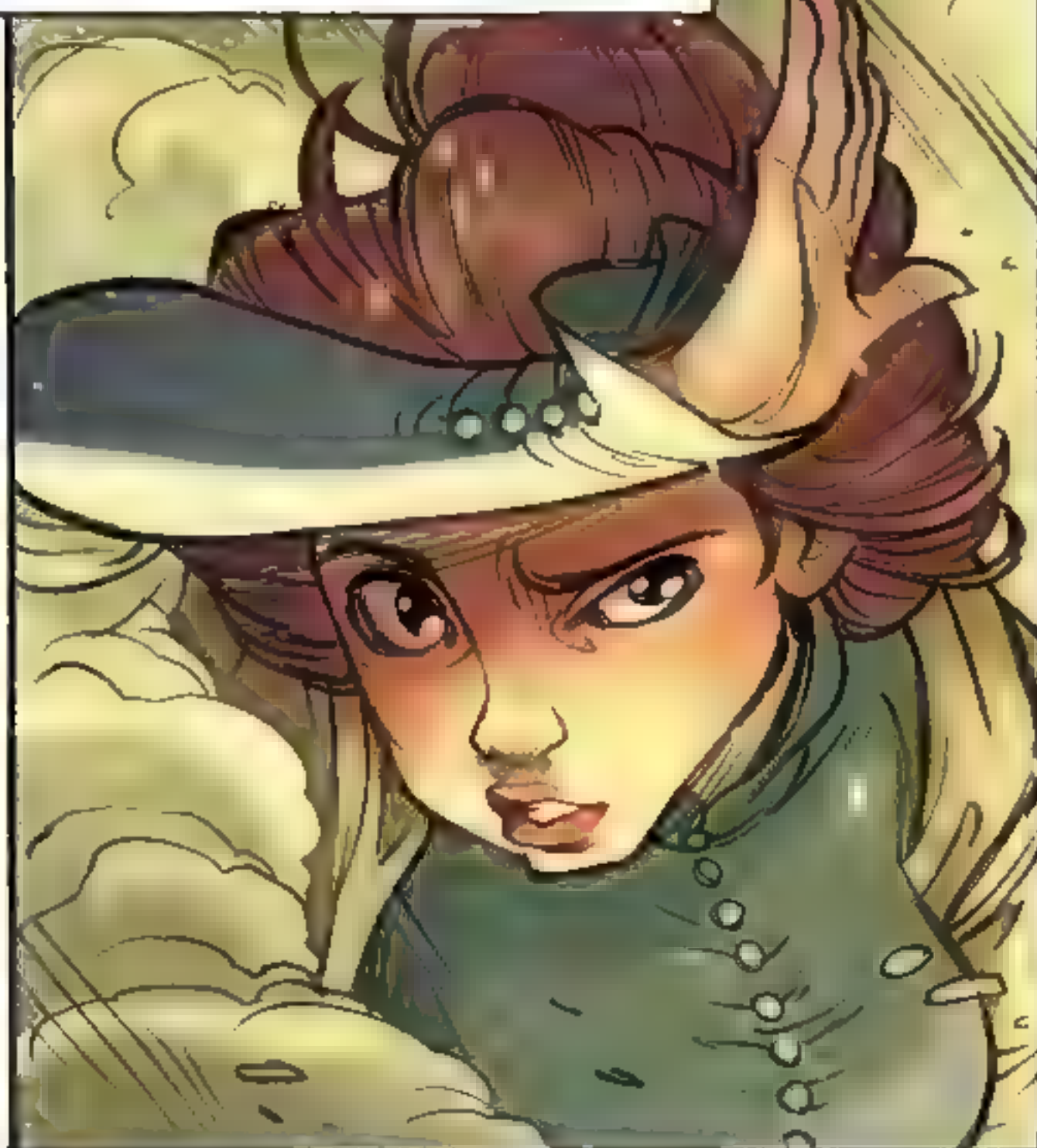
I WAS A SCIENTIST, STUDYING THE MYTHOLOGIES OF THE SMALL PEOPLE WE CALL THE FAES. THEY SAID THEY HAD MIGRATED TO OTHER WORLDS...



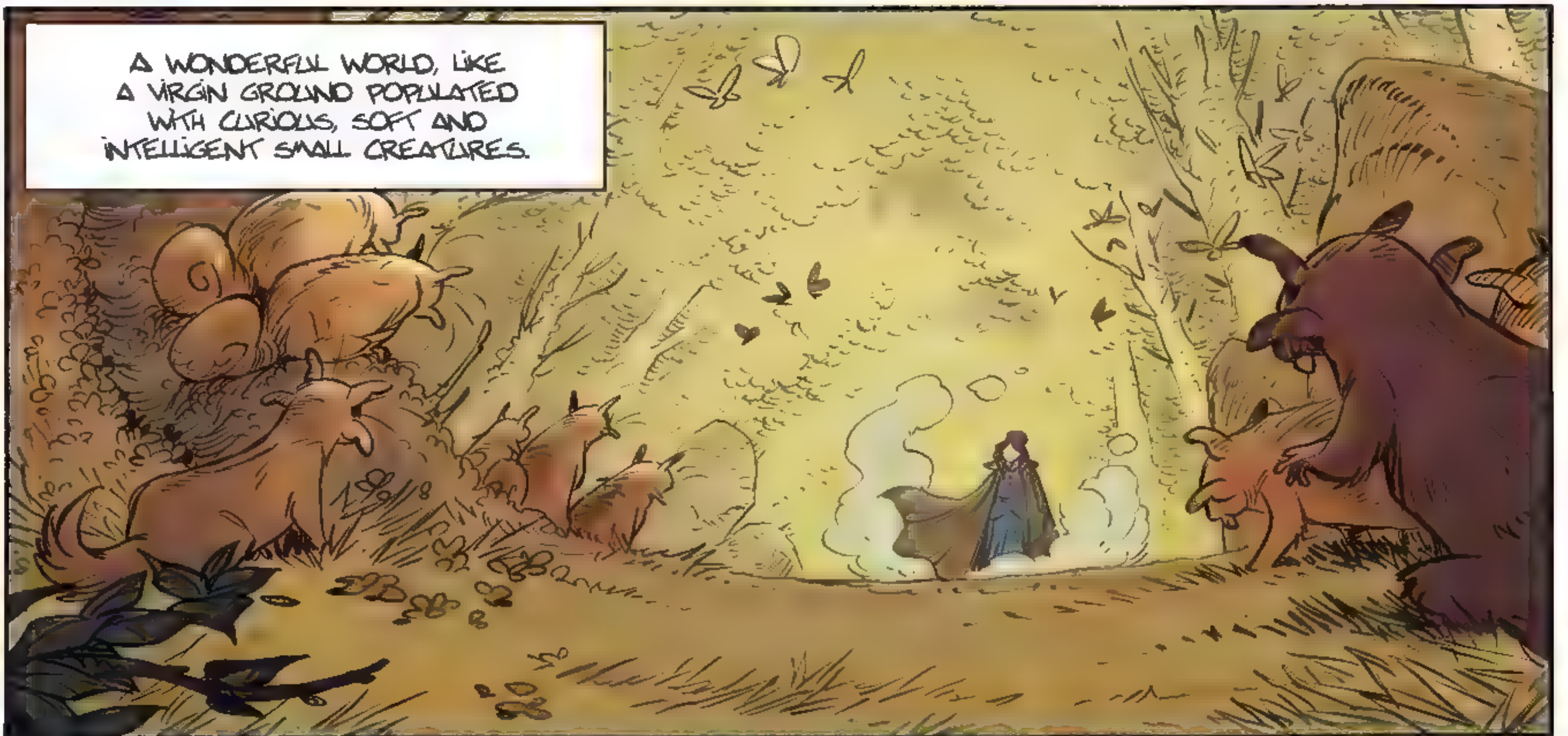
THROUGH MY RESEARCH, I DISCOVERED THE POWER OF THE THALMIC ENERGY, I BECAME FILLED WITH IT, AND I LEARNED HOW TO OPEN A DOOR TO A DIFFERENT REALITY.



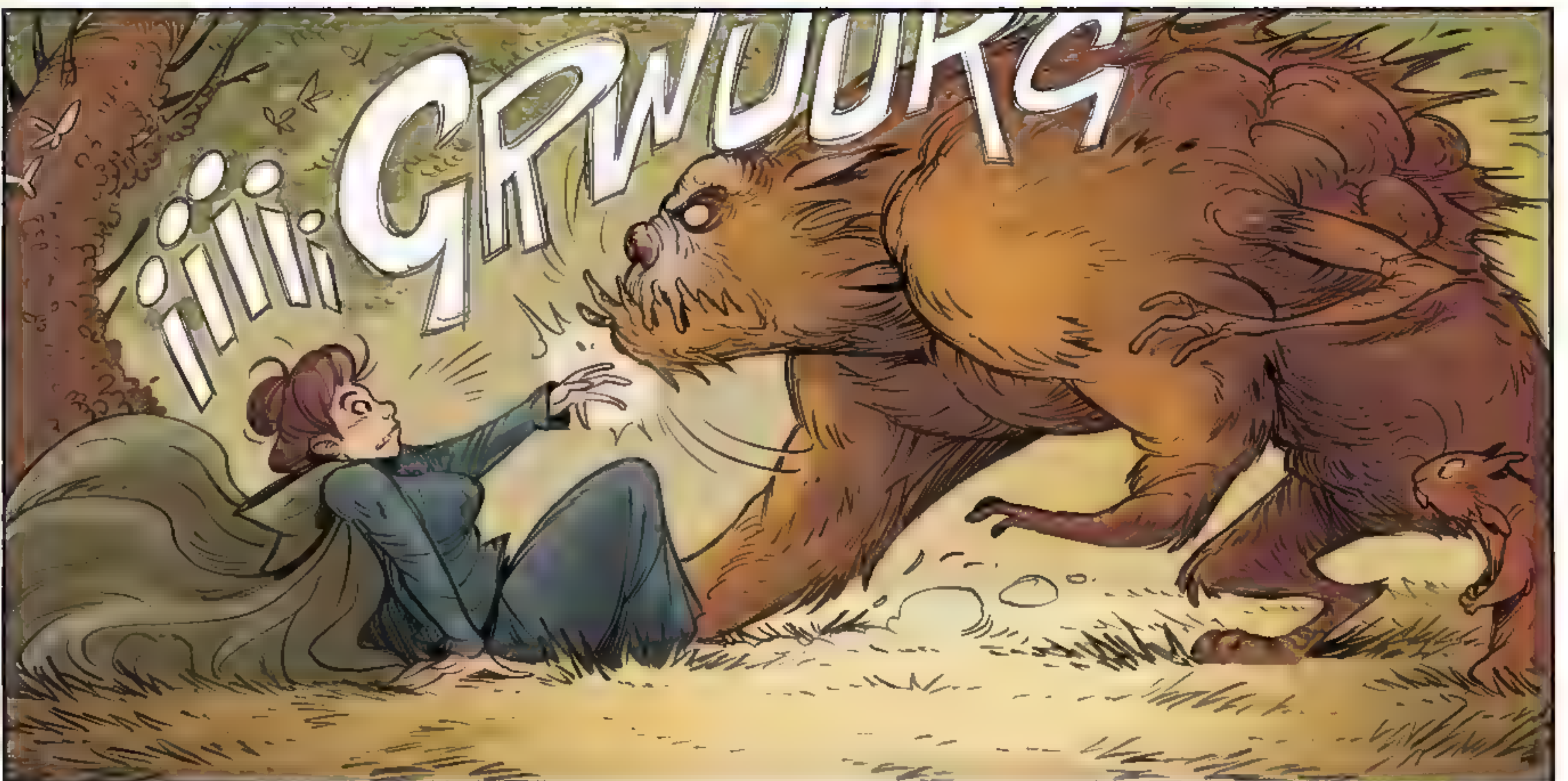
EXHO WAS THERE, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MIRROR.



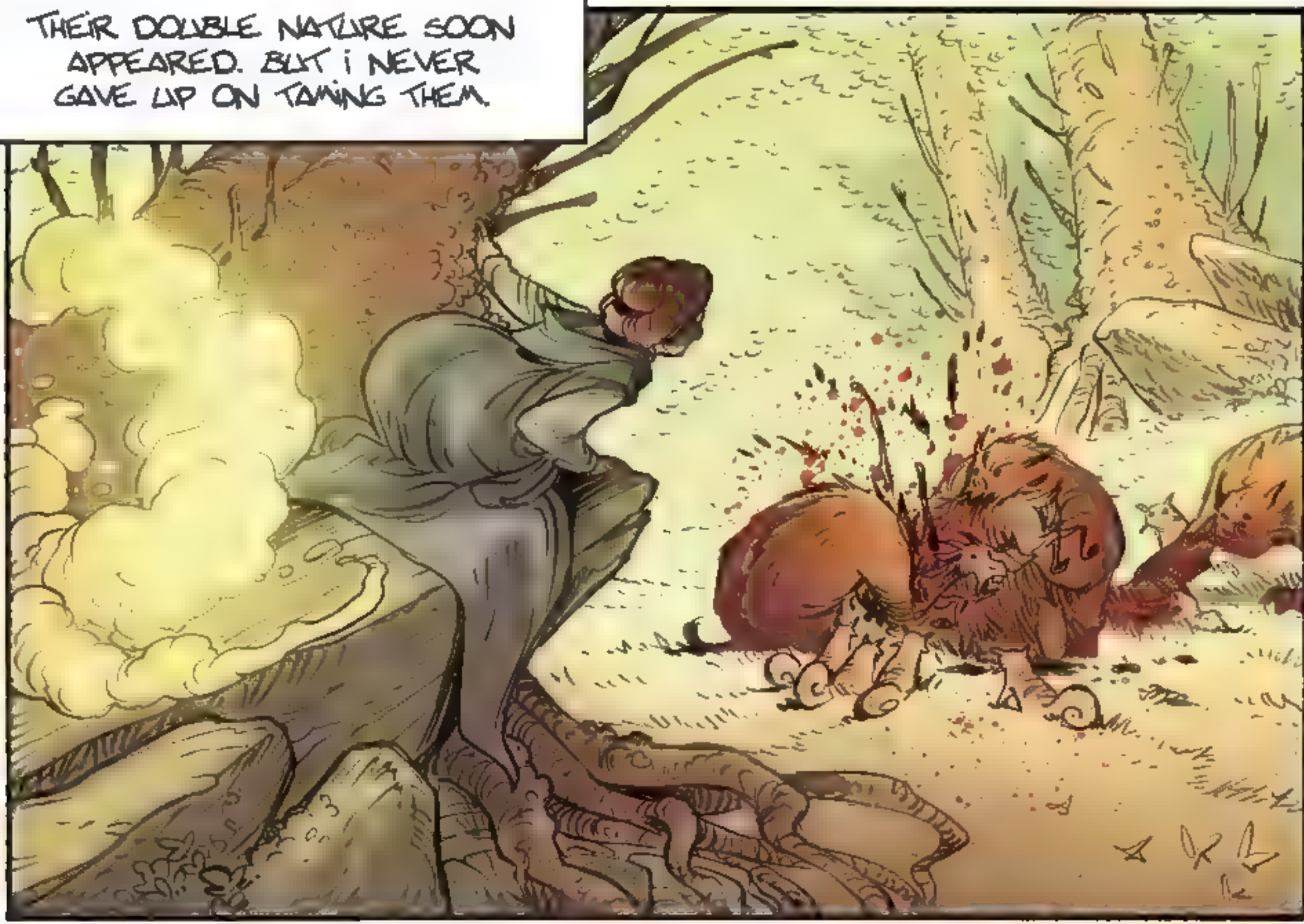
A WONDERFUL WORLD, LIKE A VIRGIN GROUND POPULATED WITH CURIOUS, SOFT AND INTELLIGENT SMALL CREATURES.



WANT A PIECE OF MUFFIN? DON'T BE SCARED...



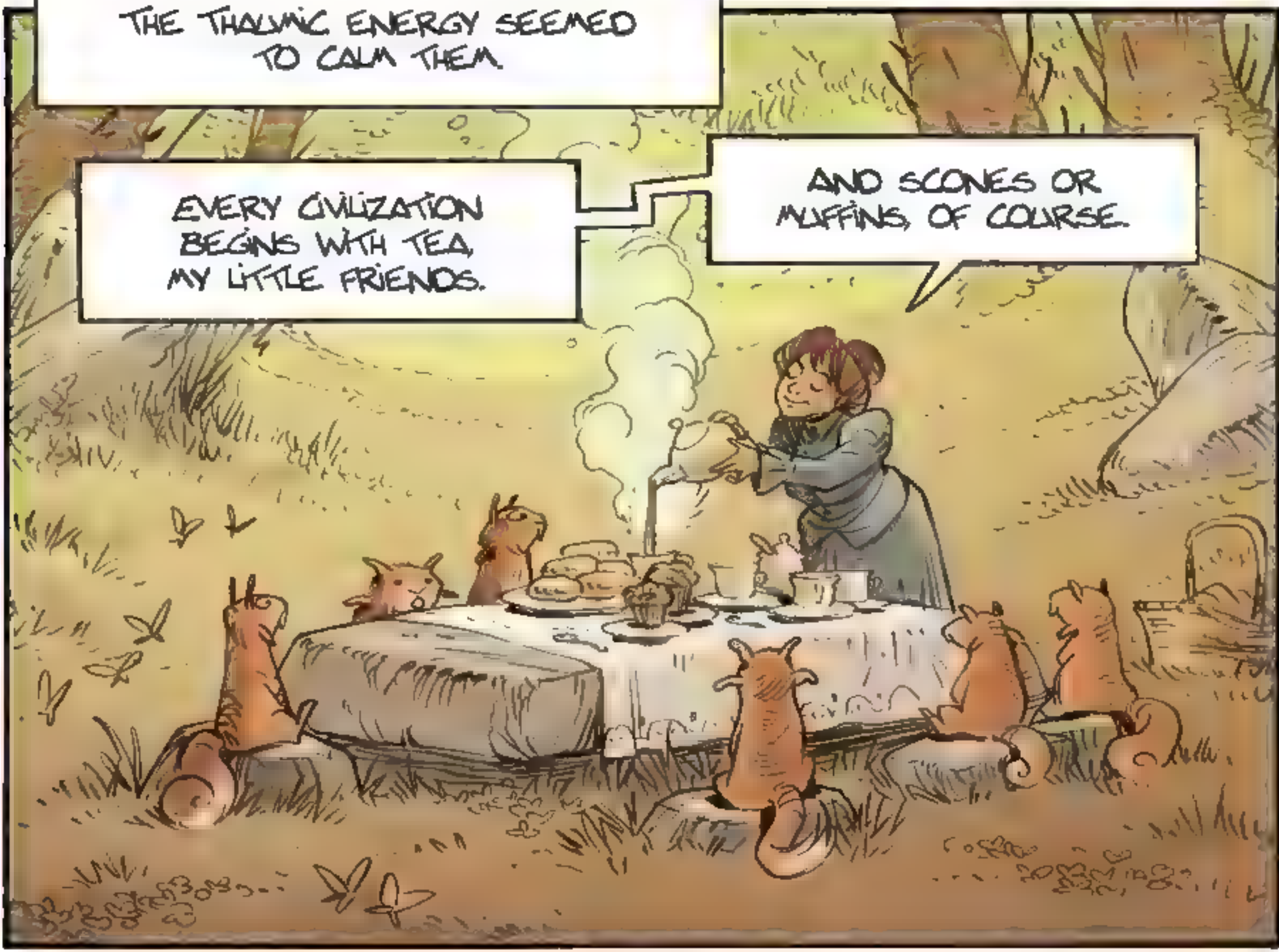
THEIR DOUBLE NATURE SOON APPEARED. BUT I NEVER GAVE UP ON TAMING THEM.



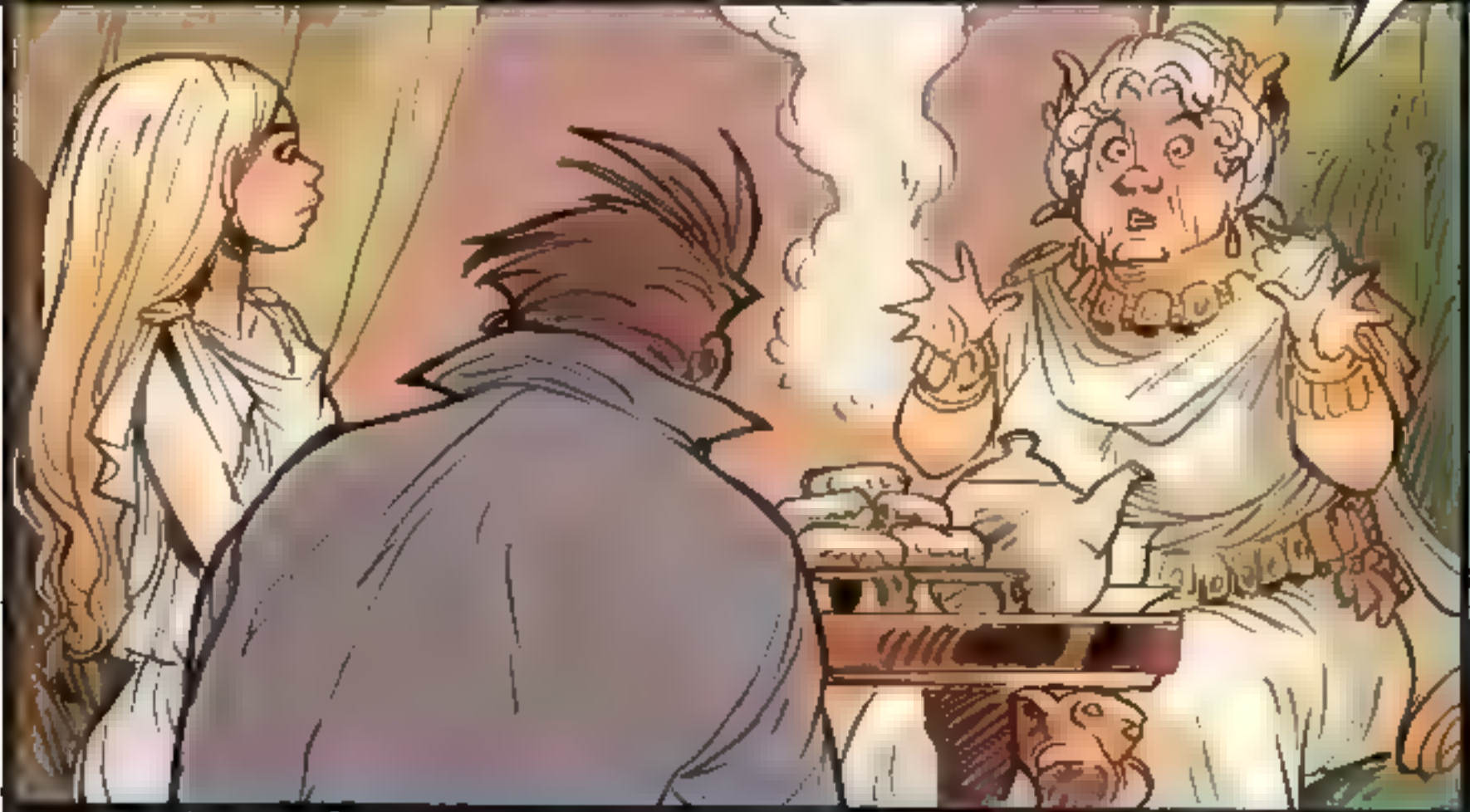
THE THALMIC ENERGY SEEMED TO CALM THEM.

EVERY CIVILIZATION BEGINS WITH TEA, MY LITTLE FRIENDS.

AND SCONES OR MUFFINS, OF COURSE.



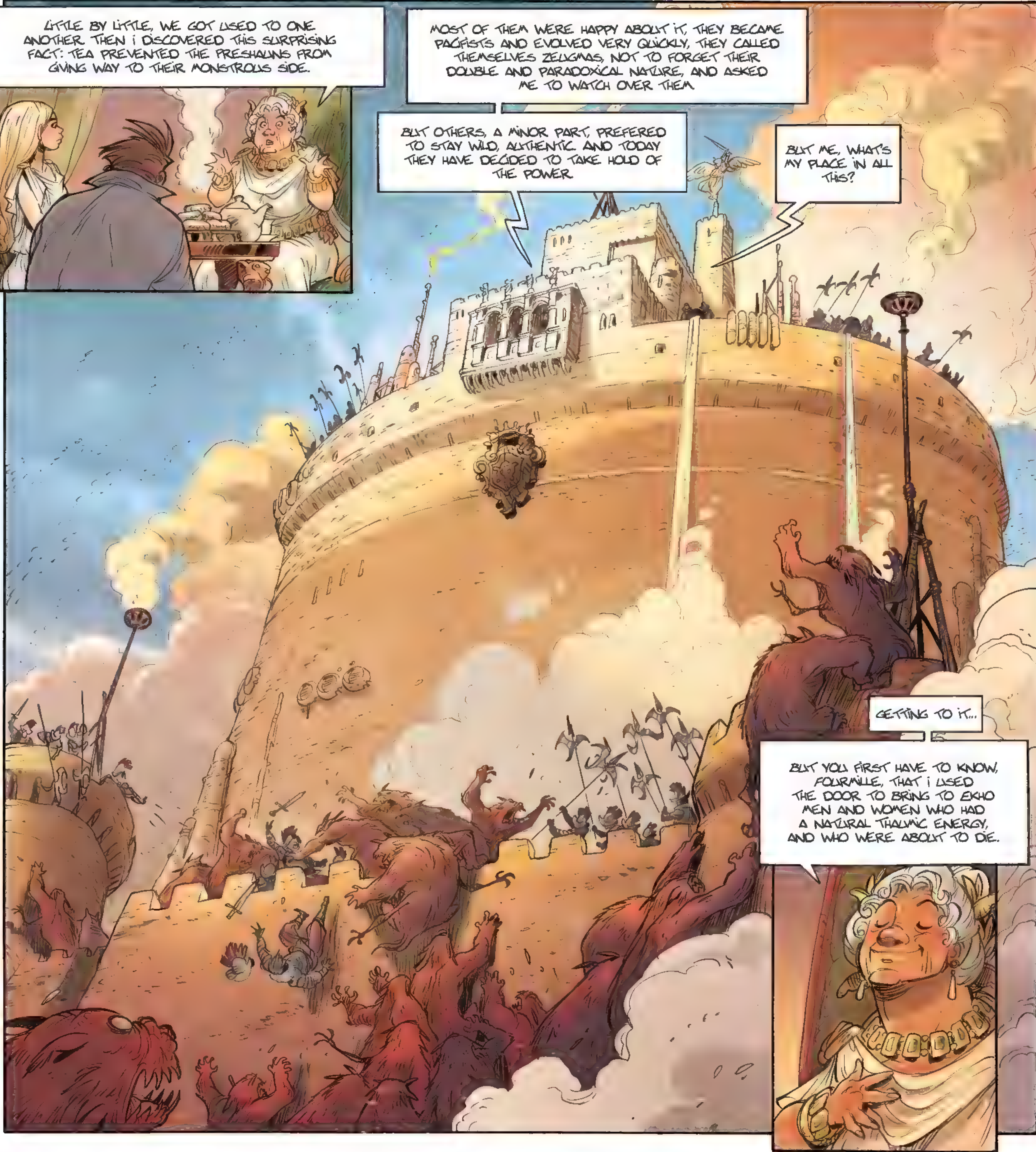
LITTLE BY LITTLE, WE GOT USED TO ONE ANOTHER. THEN I DISCOVERED THIS SURPRISING FACT: TEA PREVENTED THE PRESHAINS FROM GIVING WAY TO THEIR MONSTROUS SIDE.



MOST OF THEM WERE HAPPY ABOUT IT, THEY BECAME PACIFISTS AND EVOLVED VERY QUICKLY, THEY CALLED THEMSELVES ZELGMAS, NOT TO FORGET THEIR DOUBLE AND PARADOXICAL NATURE, AND ASKED ME TO WATCH OVER THEM.

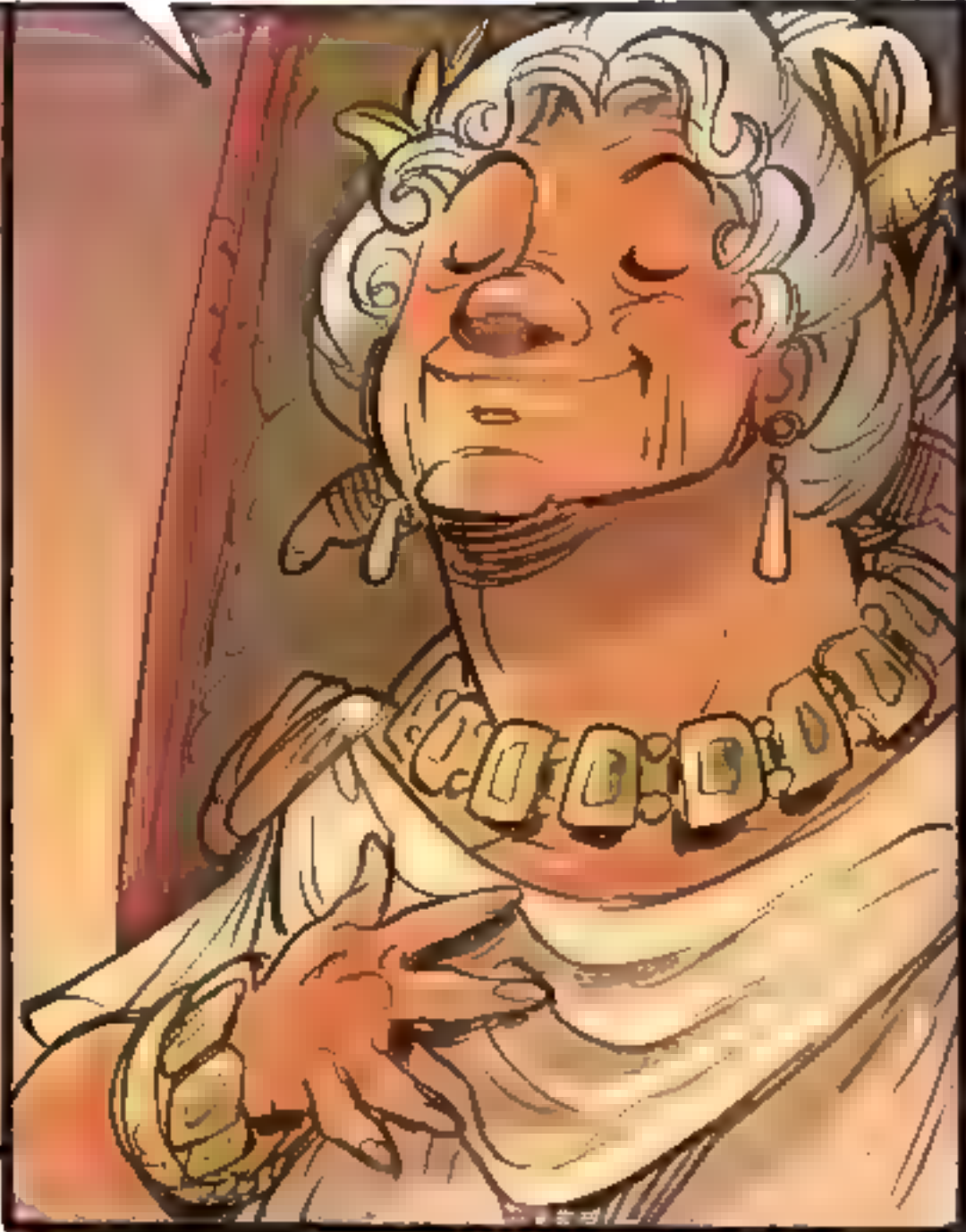
BUT OTHERS, A MINOR PART, PREFERRED TO STAY WILD, AUTHENTIC. AND TODAY THEY HAVE DECIDED TO TAKE HOLD OF THE POWER.

BUT ME, WHAT'S MY PLACE IN ALL THIS?



GETTING TO IT...

BUT YOU FIRST HAVE TO KNOW, FOURMILLE, THAT I USED THE DOOR TO BRING TO EKHO MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAD A NATURAL THALMIC ENERGY, AND WHO WERE ABOUT TO DIE.



HERE THEY COULD GO ON LIVING AND UNCONSCIOUSLY BRING THEIR SOOTHING ENERGY, HELP THE FRESHAIN CIVILIZATION TO DEVELOP.



CURIOUSLY, THEY STARTED BUILDING WHAT THEY KNEW ON EARTH. THAT'S WHAT GIVES TO EKHO THIS STRANGE FEELING OF THE ALREADY FAMILIAR.



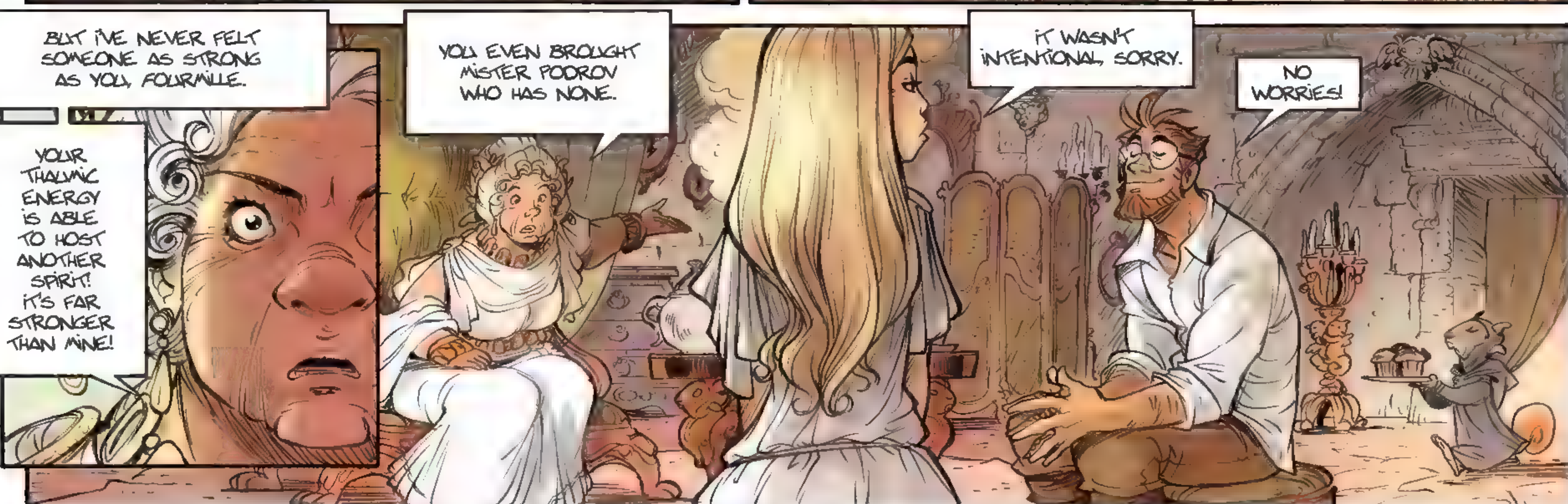
BUT I'VE NEVER FELT SOMEONE AS STRONG AS YOU, FOURMILLE.

YOU EVEN BROUGHT MISTER PODROV WHO HAS NONE.

IT WASN'T INTENTIONAL, SORRY.

NO WORRIES!

YOUR THALMIC ENERGY IS ABLE TO HOST ANOTHER SPIRIT! IT'S FAR STRONGER THAN MINE!

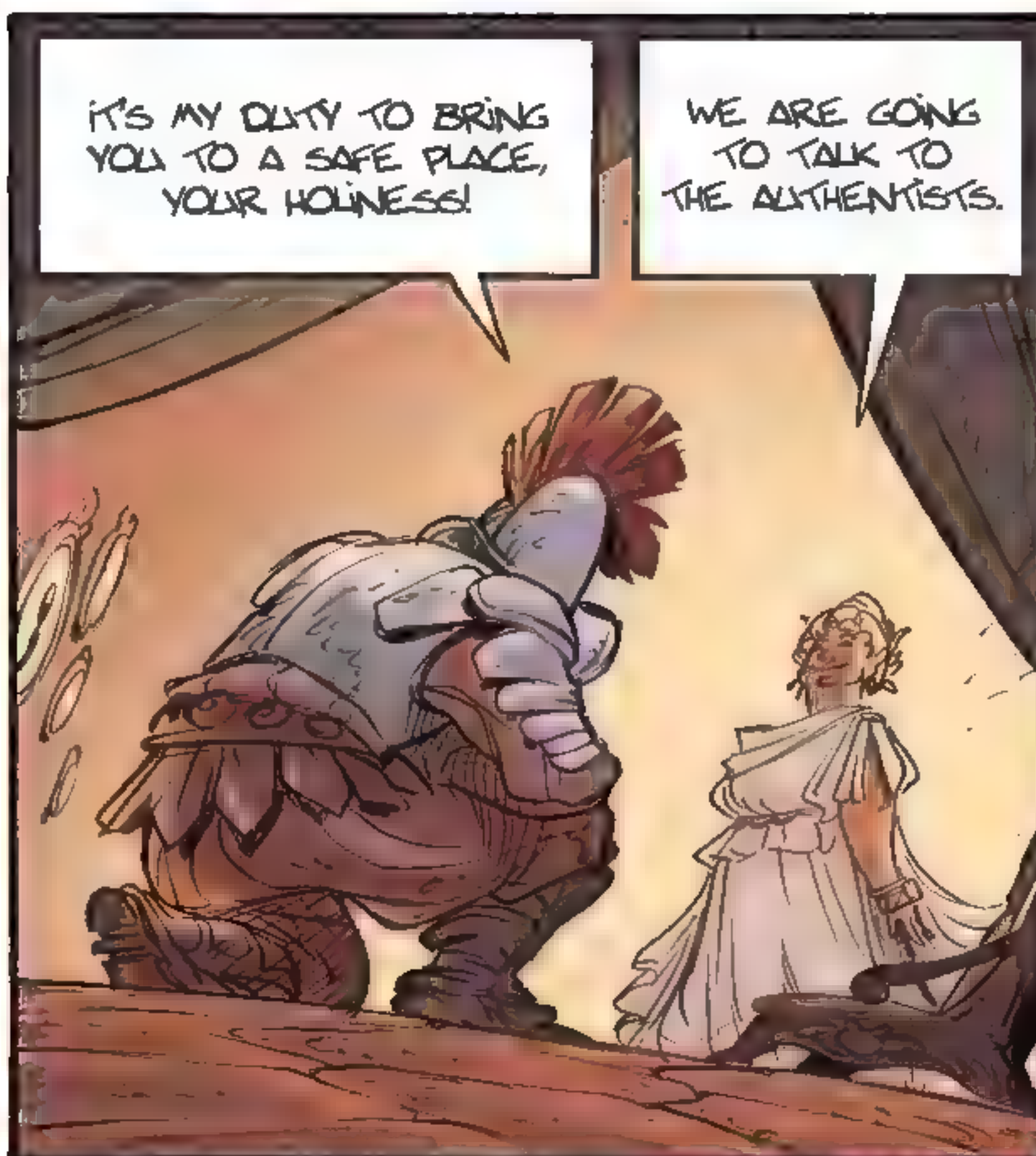


THE ENEMY TOOK THE FIRST FORTIFICATION. THE SITUATION IS CRITICAL.

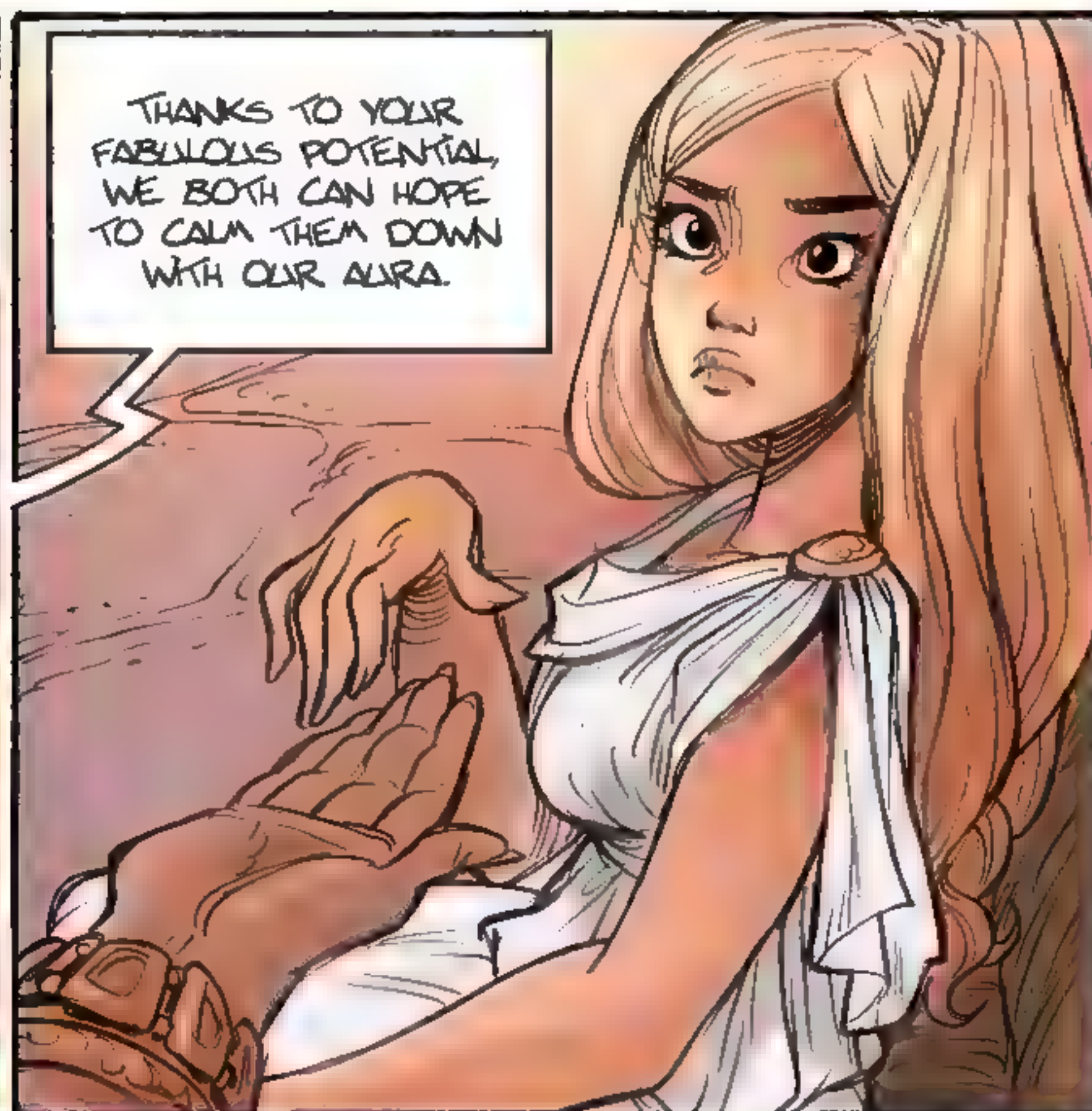


IT'S MY DUTY TO BRING YOU TO A SAFE PLACE, YOUR HOLINESS!

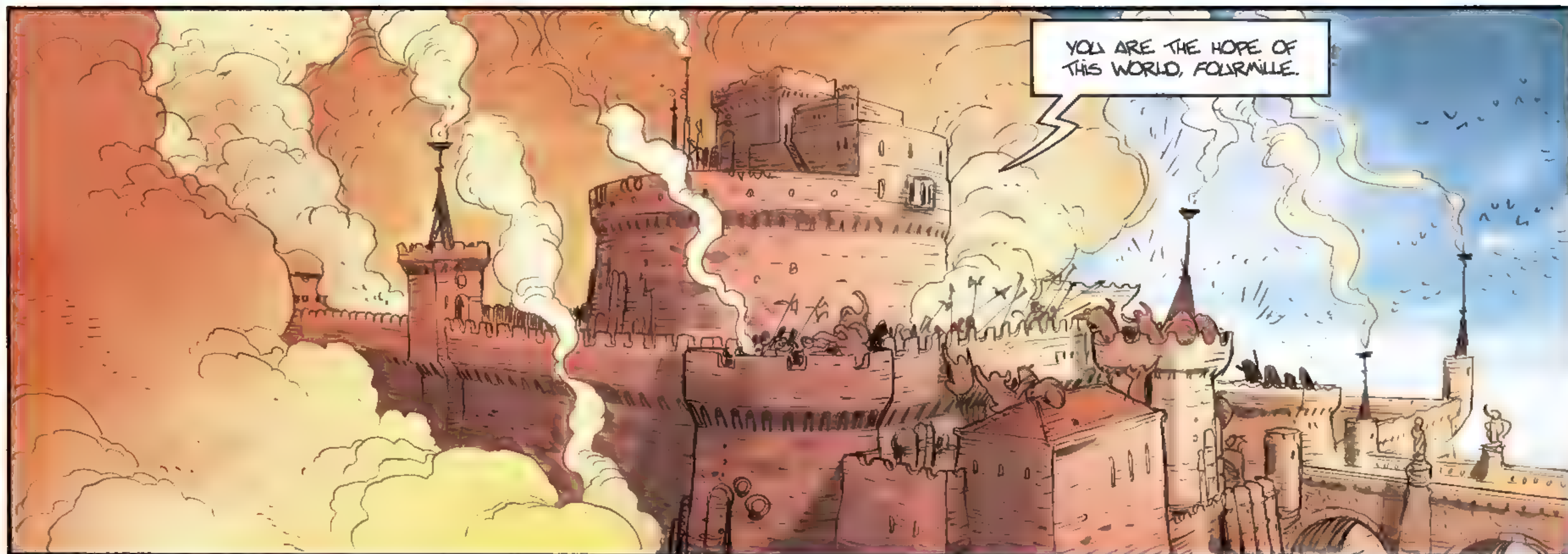
WE ARE GOING TO TALK TO THE AUTHENTISTS.



THANKS TO YOUR FABULOUS POTENTIAL, WE BOTH CAN HOPE TO CALM THEM DOWN WITH OUR AURA.



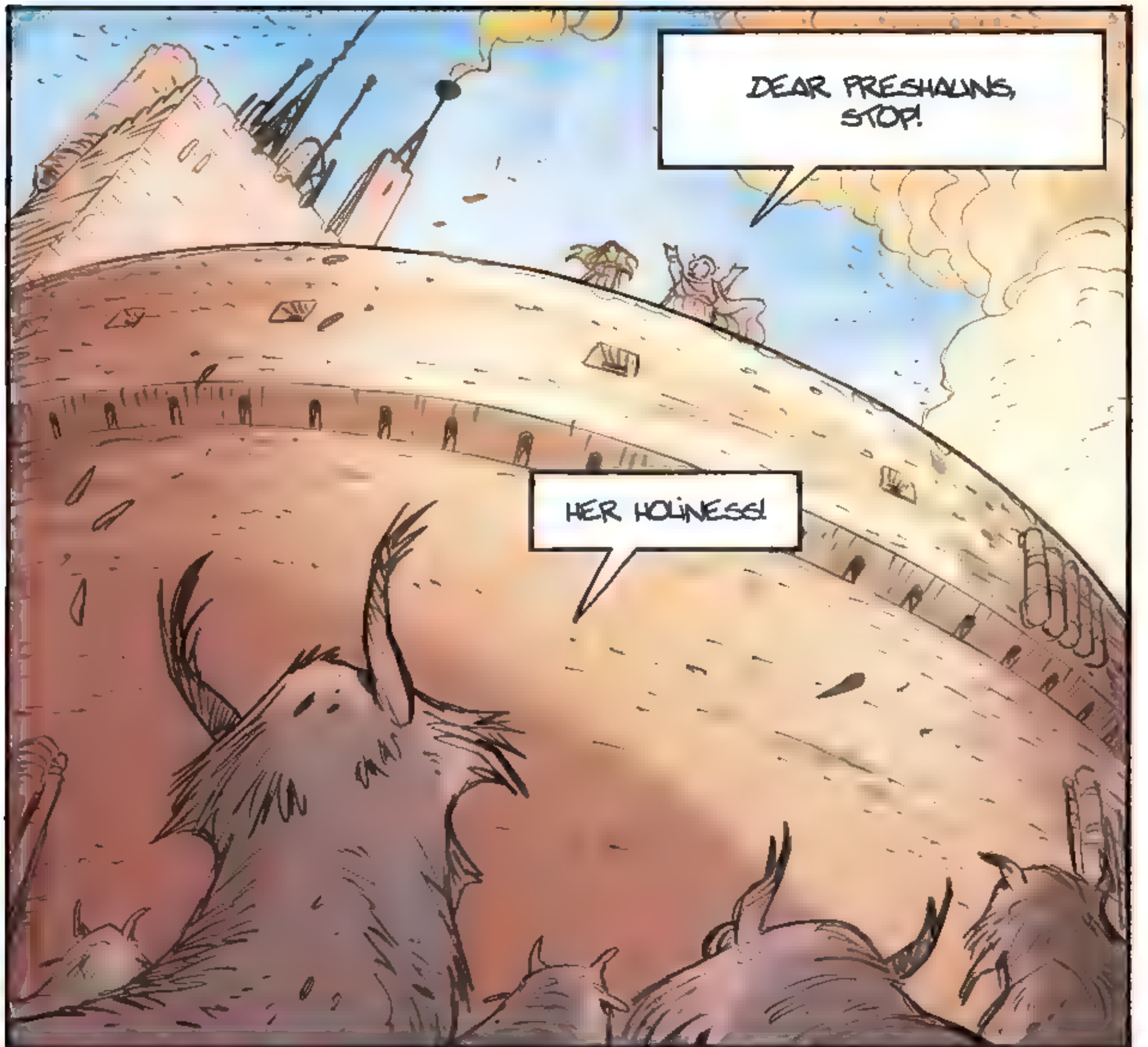
YOU ARE THE HOPE OF THIS WORLD, FOURMILLE.





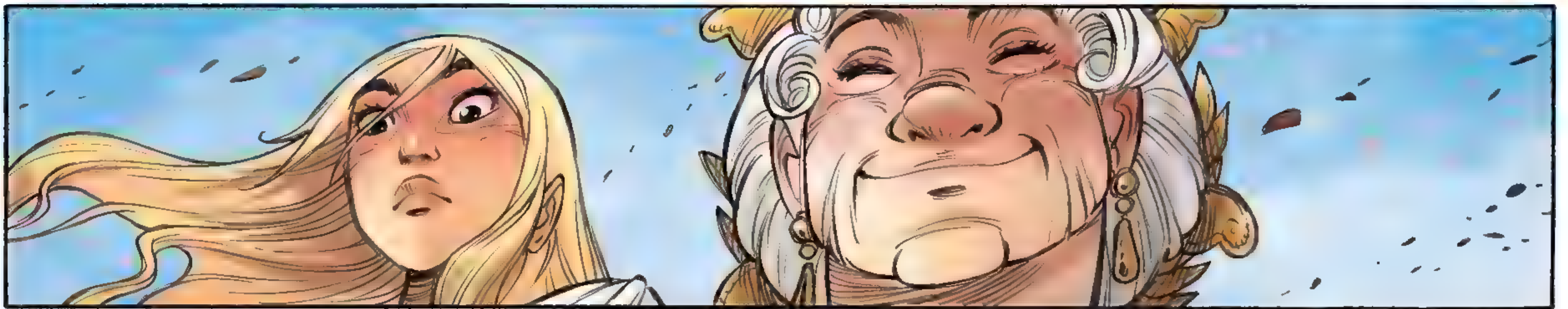
TAKE THE STRONGHOLD!

METAPHRAST...



DEAR FRESHALINS
STOP!

HER HOLINESS!

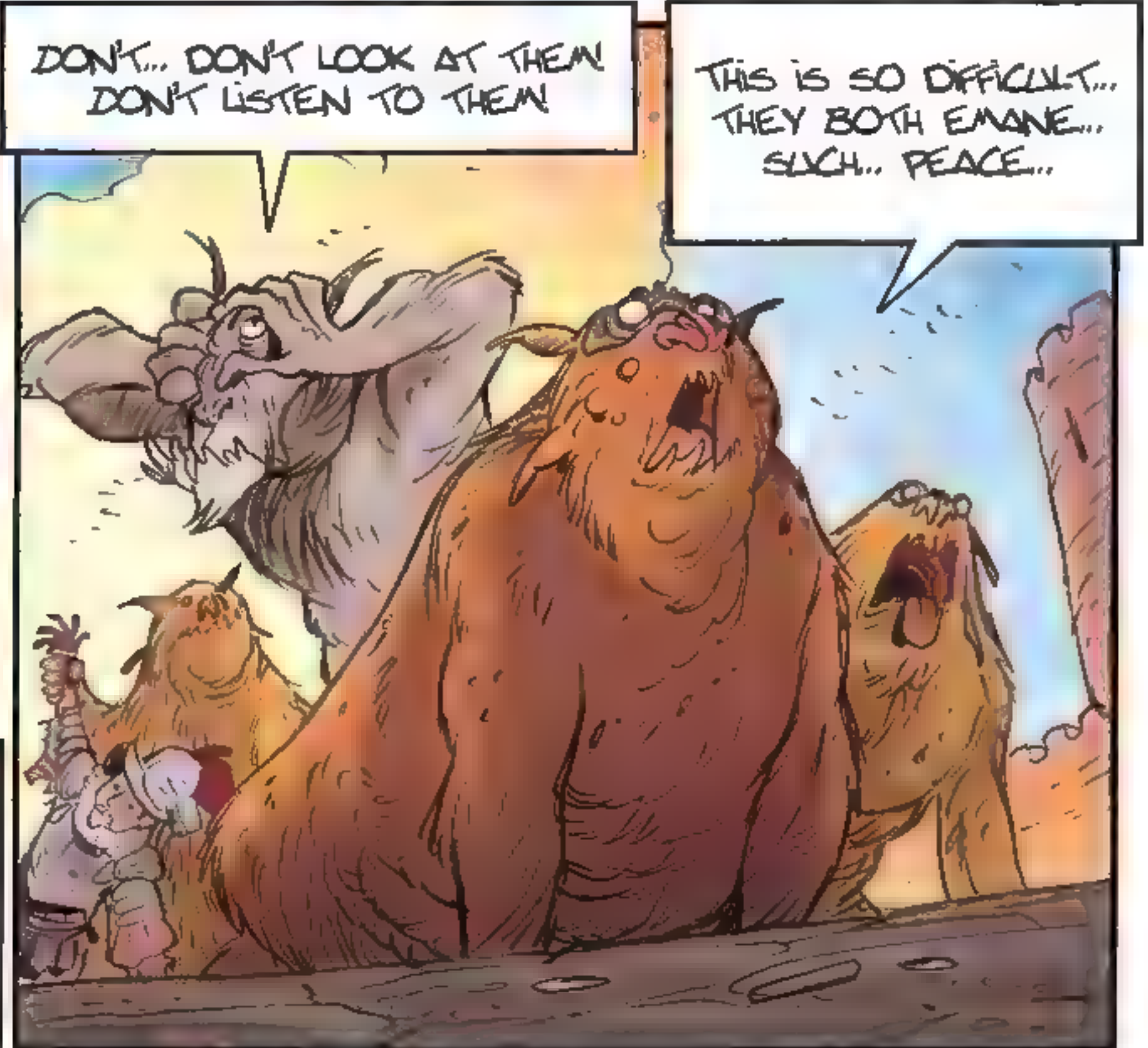


MAYBE I'M SAYING SOMETHING
STUPID, BUT IF YOU ALL
ZELGMAS CHANGED, COULDN'T
YOU EASILY BEAT THEM?



TSSE! AS
I ALREADY
TOLD YOU IN
THE ARENA,
THIS IS OUT OF
THE QUESTION.

THIS WOULD BE
THEIR VICTORY!
THE PROOF THAT
THE MONSTROUS
SHAPE IS
THE BEST.



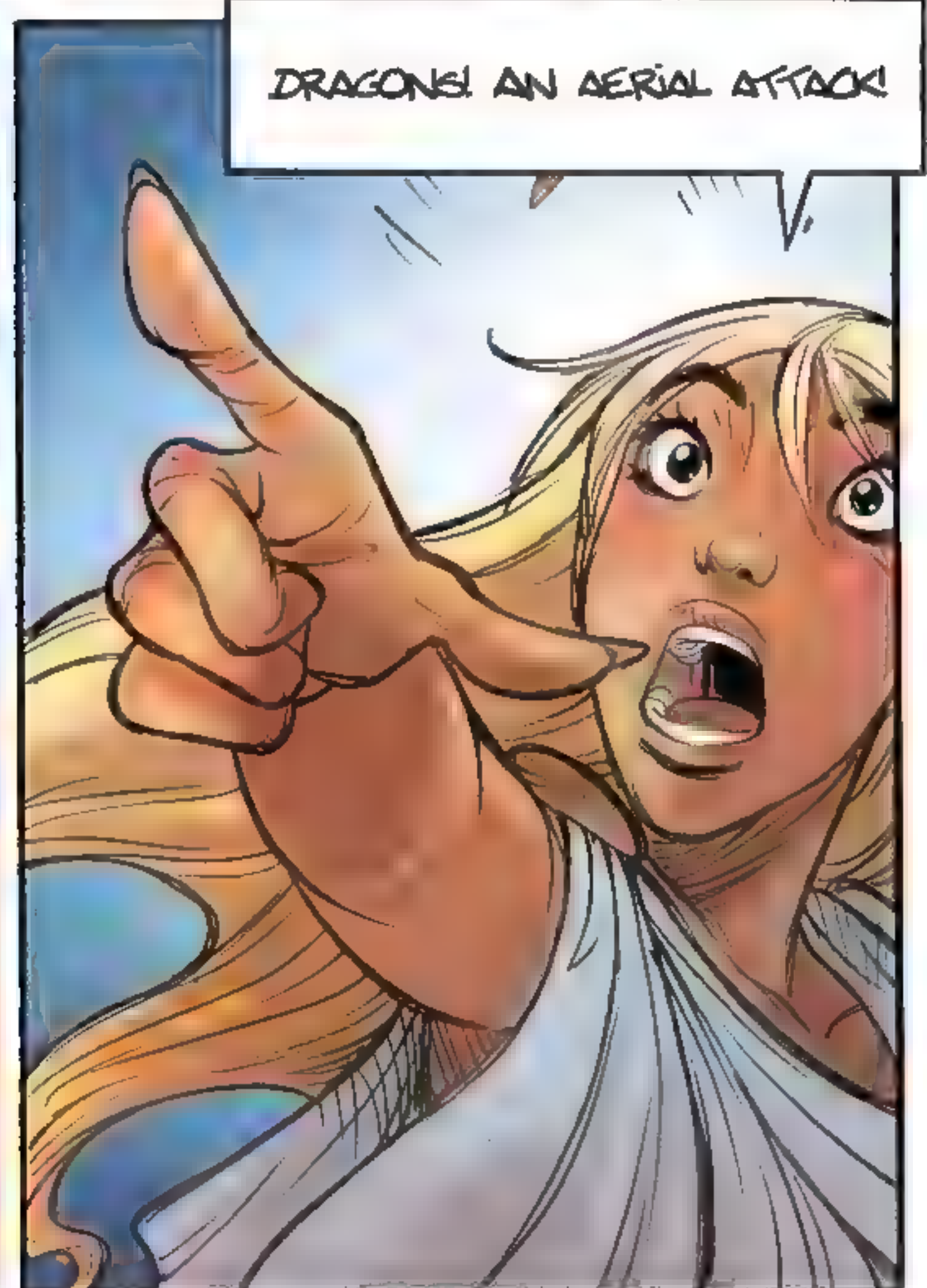
DON'T... DON'T LOOK AT THEM!
DON'T LISTEN TO THEM!

THIS IS SO DIFFICULT...
THEY BOTH EMANE...
SUCH... PEACE...



THEY STOPPED, BUT
DIDN'T CHANGE INTO
KIND SQUIRRELS...

FOCUS! RELAX
AND IRRADIATE
THE POSITIVE
THAT'S IN YOU!



DRAGONS! AN AERIAL ATTACK!





YES, THE BORGHESE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN OUR ALLIES. FRAN WELCOMED ME INTO HIS HOME SO THAT I COULD GET A BETTER IDEA OF YOU...



I SENT HIM TO PROTECT YOU DURING THE CRUISE. I WAS SUSPECTING THE AUTHENTISTS WOULD TRY SOMETHING.



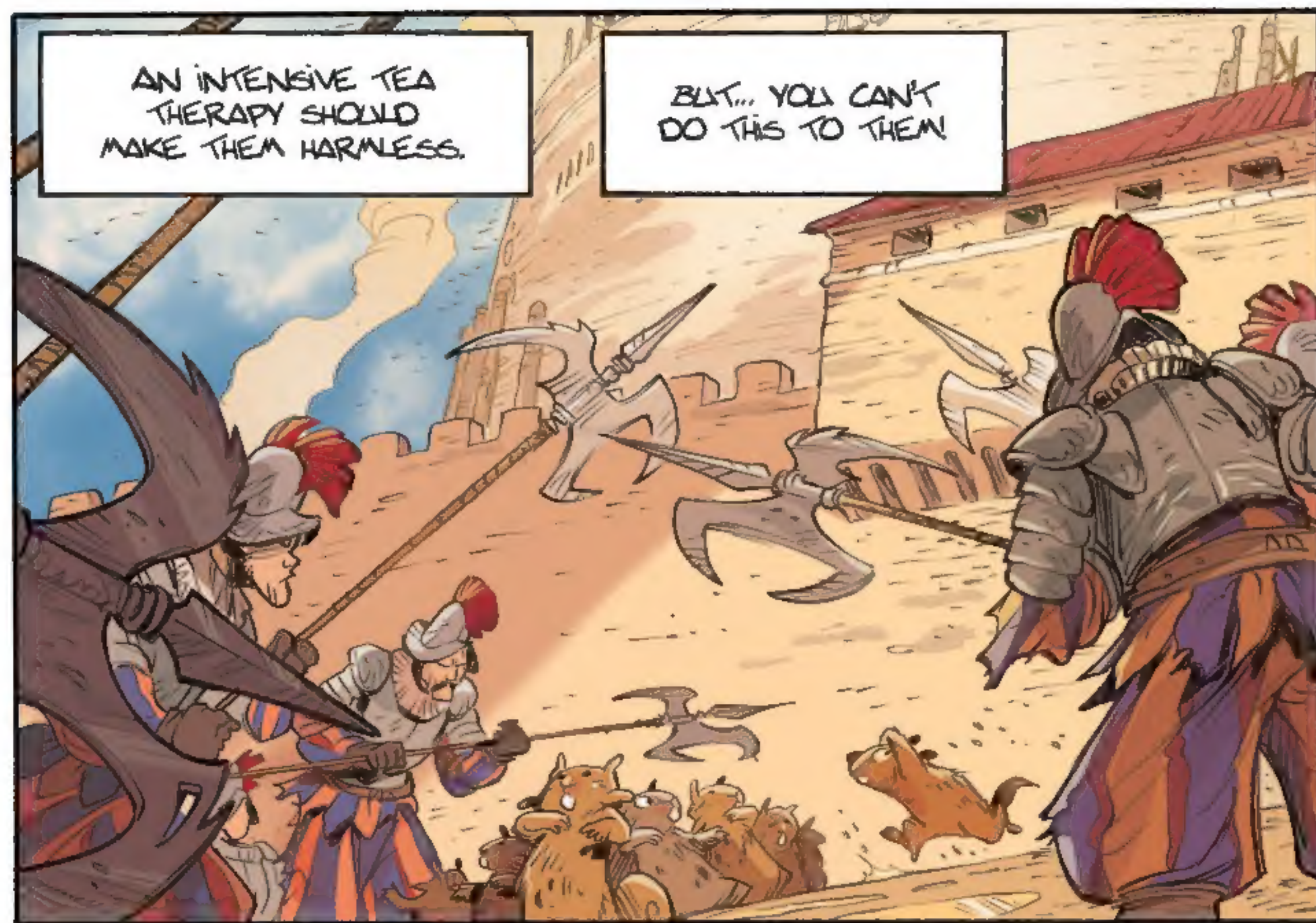
BUT I DIDN'T THINK ARGONTE WOULD END THIS WAY...

I AM VERY DISAPPOINTED, SIGSBERT.

I... I'M ASHAMED...



WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH THE PRISONERS?



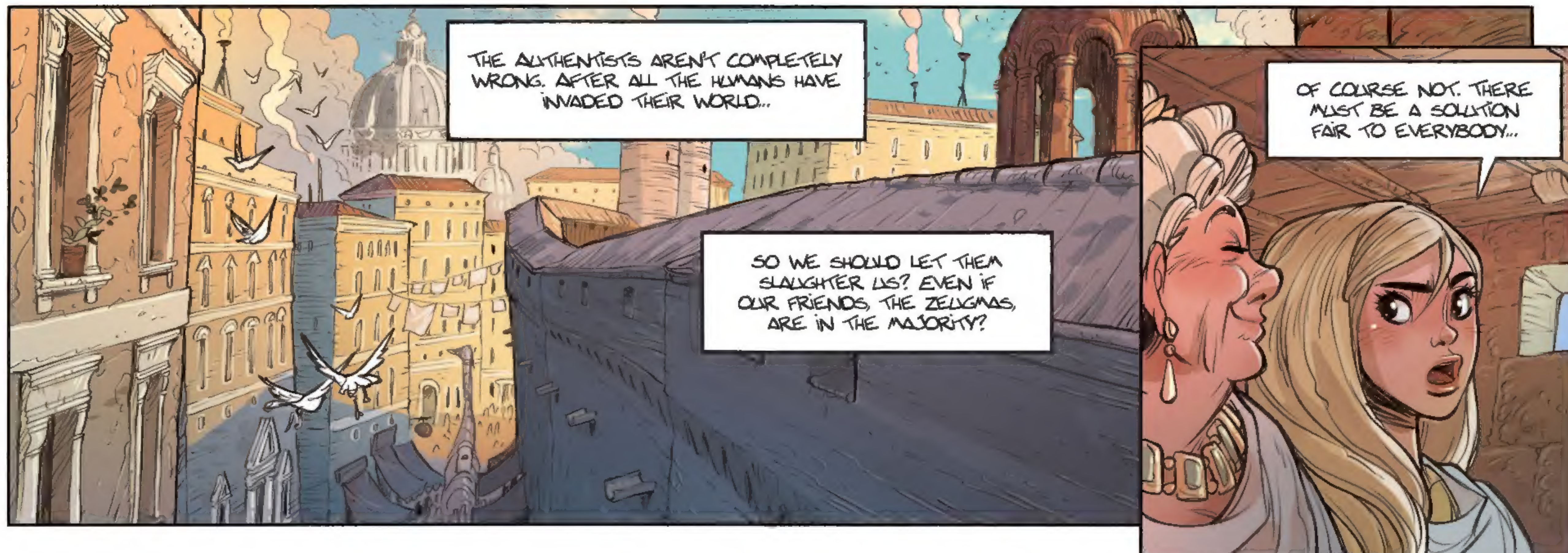
AN INTENSIVE TEA THERAPY SHOULD MAKE THEM HARMLESS.

BUT... YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO THEM!



CAN'T I? AND TELL ME WHY, FOURMILLE GRATULE!

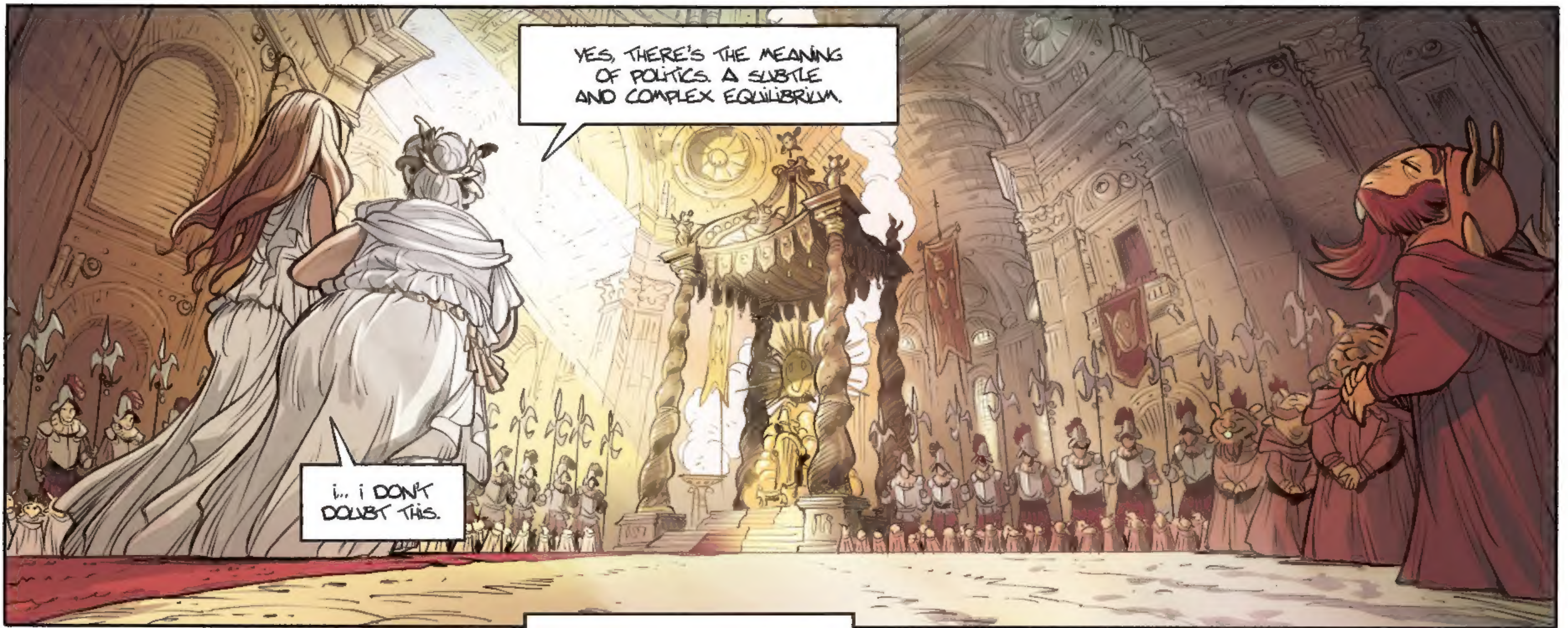
WELL... THE FRESHALINS ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR NATURE!



THE AUTHENTISTS AREN'T COMPLETELY WRONG. AFTER ALL THE HUMANS HAVE INVADDED THEIR WORLD...

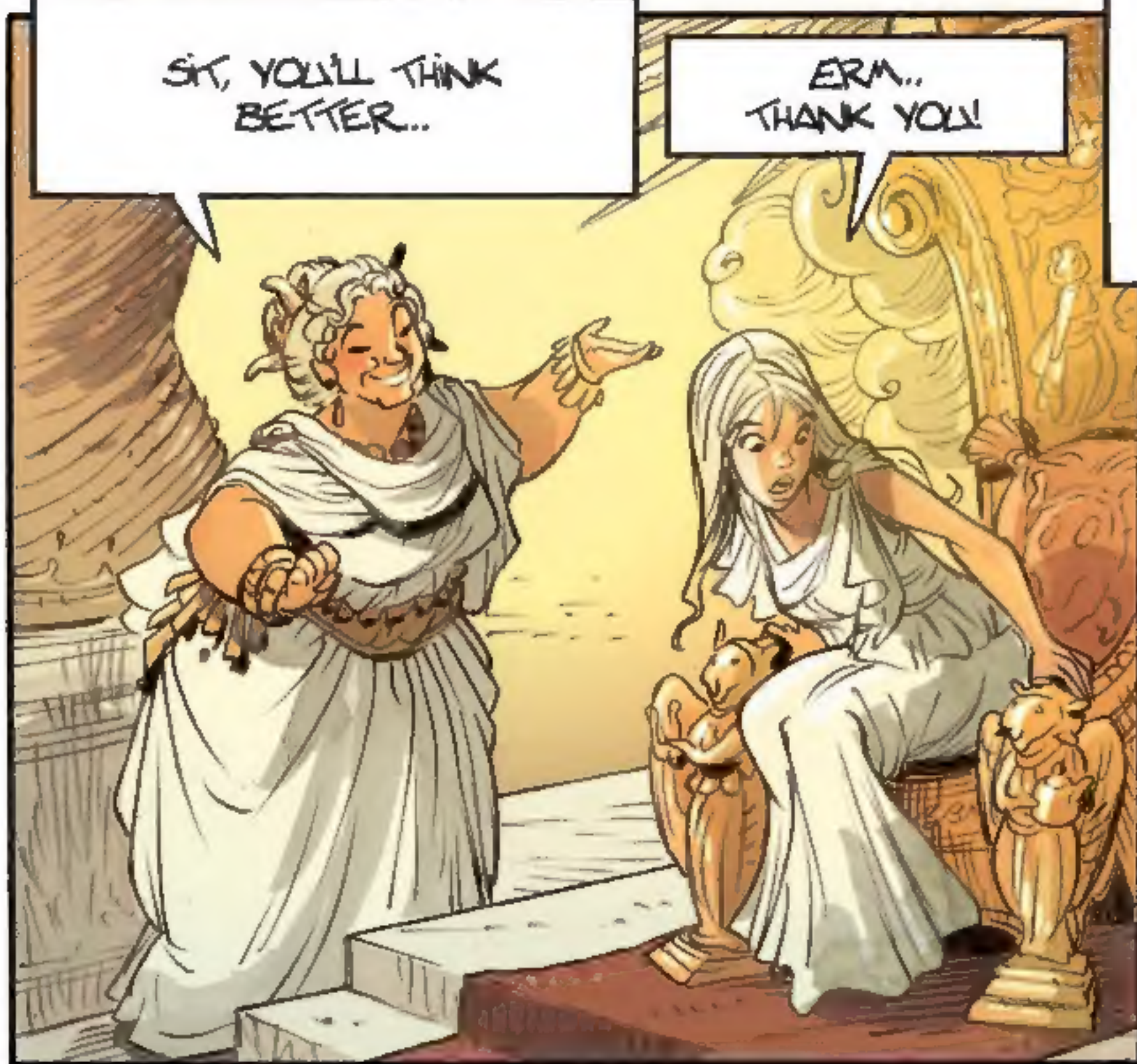
SO WE SHOULD LET THEM SLAUGHTER US? EVEN IF OUR FRIENDS THE ZELGMAS ARE IN THE MAJORITY?

OF COURSE NOT. THERE MUST BE A SOLUTION FAIR TO EVERYBODY...



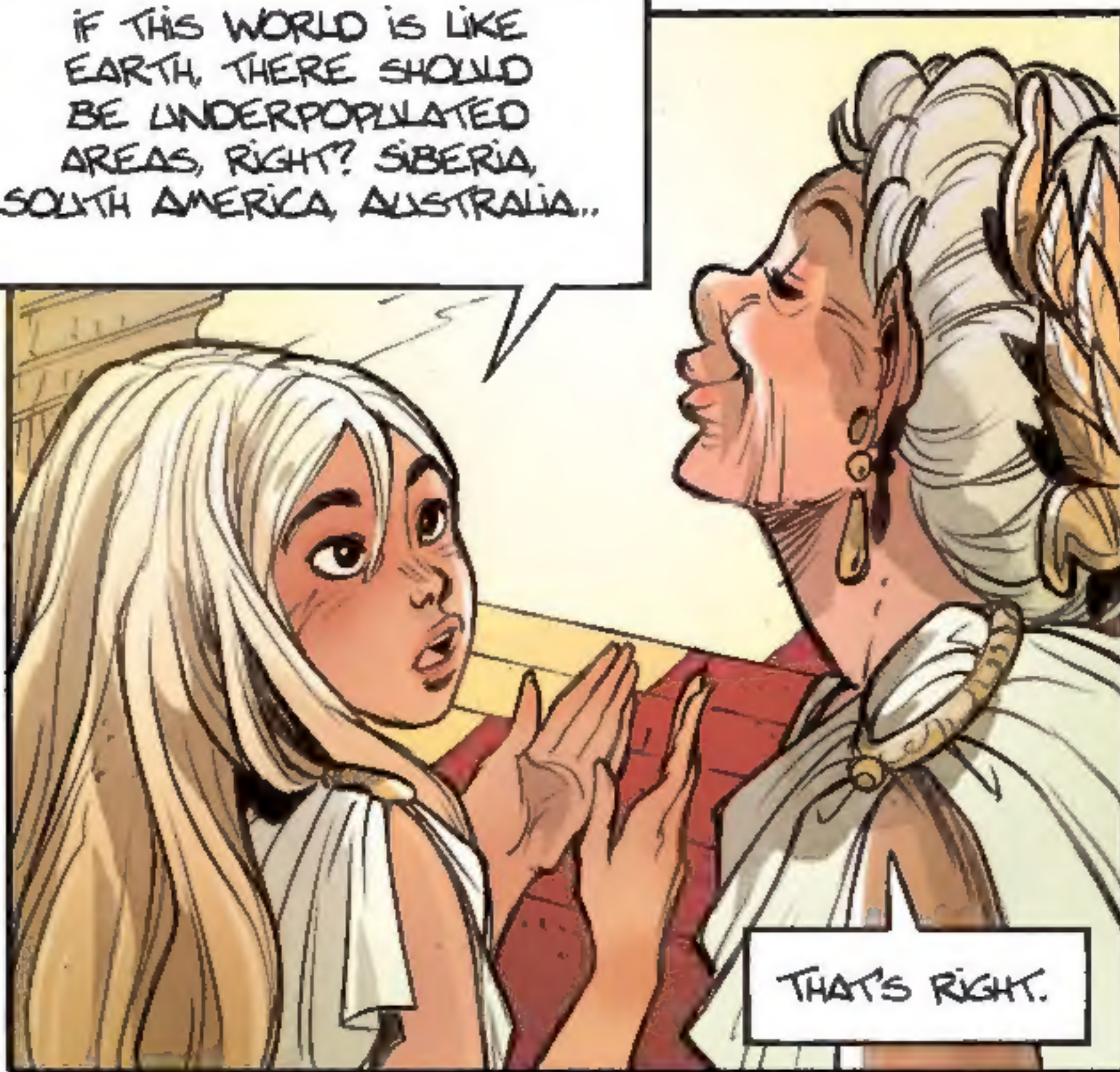
YES, THERE'S THE MEANING OF POLITICS. A SUBTLE AND COMPLEX EQUILIBRIUM.

i... i DON'T DOUBT THIS.



SEE, YOU'LL THINK BETTER...

ERM... THANK YOU!



IF THIS WORLD IS LIKE EARTH, THERE SHOULD BE UNDERPOPULATED AREAS, RIGHT? SIBERIA, SOUTH AMERICA, AUSTRALIA...

THAT'S RIGHT.



SO, COULDN'T WE CREATE AREAS DEDICATED TO THE ALTHENTISTS?



NOT LIKE PRESERVES, HUH! JUST PLACES THEY COULD GO TO WHEN THEY'D NEED TO FREE THEIR INSTINCTS.

HUMANS WOULD BE ADVISED AGAINST ENTERING.



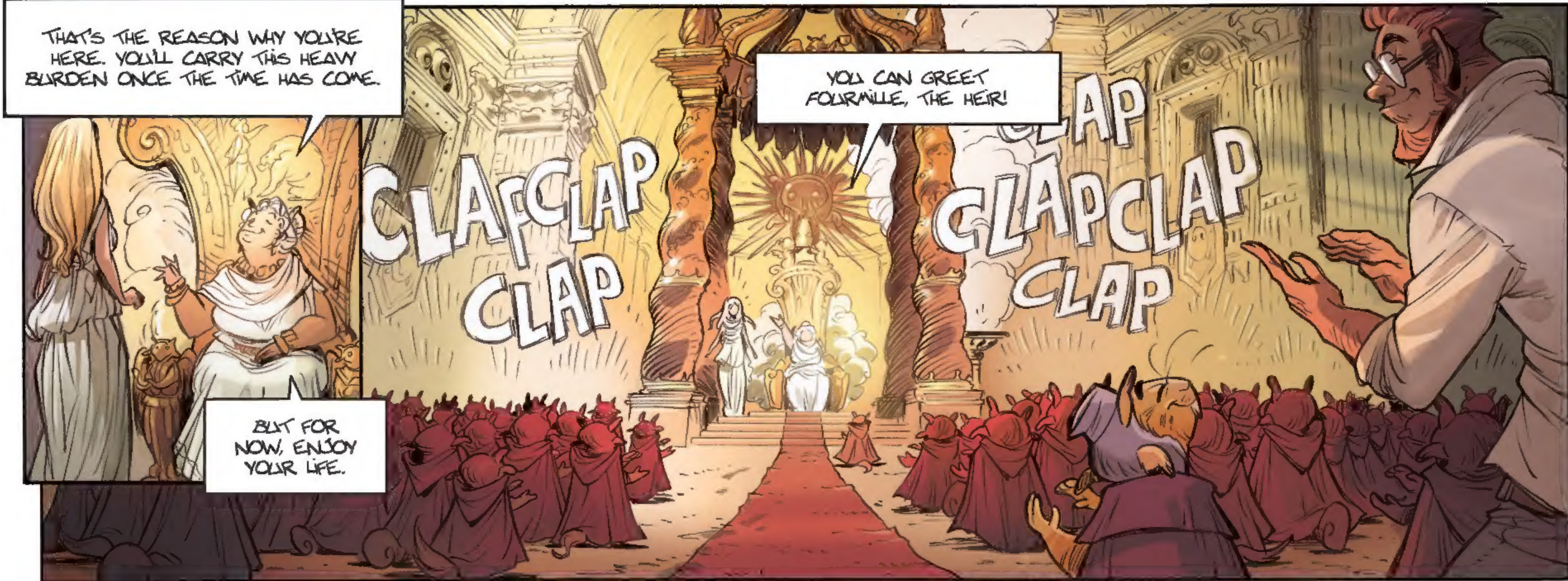
THAT SEEMS TO BE A WISE DECISION.. WORTHY OF A FUTURE PONTIFF.

WHAT??? DO YOU MEAN..



NO ENTHUSIASM, MY GIRL. I AM NOT DEAD YET!

BUT I HAD BEEN WAITING A LONG TIME FOR SOMEONE WITH ENOUGH THALMIC ENERGY AND KINDNESS TO COME AFTER ME SOME DAY.



THAT'S THE REASON WHY YOU'RE HERE. YOU'LL CARRY THIS HEAVY BURDEN ONCE THE TIME HAS COME.

YOU CAN GREET FOURMILLE, THE HEIR!

CLAP CLAP CLAP

CLAP CLAP CLAP

BUT FOR NOW, ENJOY YOUR LIFE.

